Week ending November 25 1950 Every Thursday Threepence

John Bull

Serial of the epic Amethyst book

YANGTSE INCIDENT

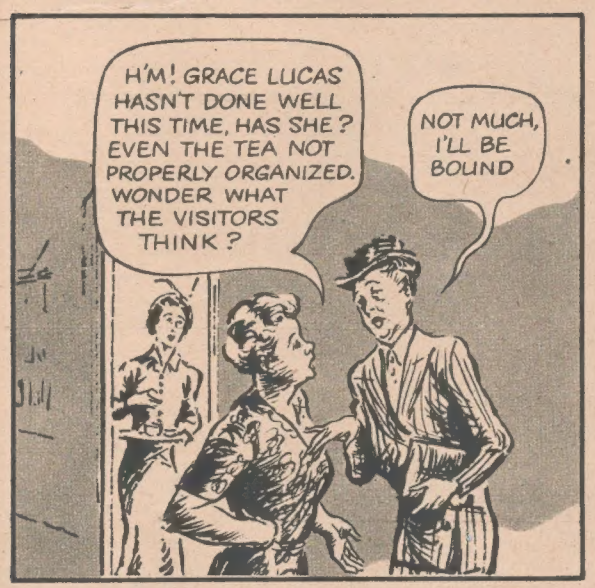
by LAWRENCE EARL

Quite deliberate
week's holiday
see whether
difficulties.
work

SHE LET THE VILLAGE DOWN

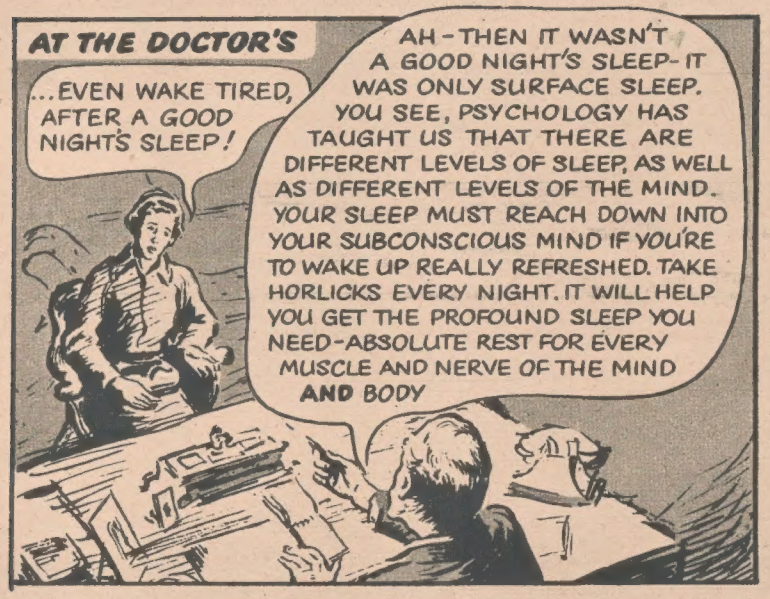
THE WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING
IT'S MRS. LUCAS' TURN TO ORGANIZE THINGS WHEN THE HADLEY BRANCH VISIT US NEXT WEEK, SO WE KNOW IT WILL BE A SUCCESS!
THINKS
OH DEAR . . . I WISH IT WASN'T MY TURN

THE DAY OF THE VISIT
WELL, IF YOU TOLD THE COACH PEOPLE THE WRONG TIME, IT CAN'T BE HELPED. DID YOU TELL THE CASTLE GUIDE WE WERE COMING?
NO, I-I THOUGHT IT WASN'T NECESSARY, I-I WAS SO TIRED, AND-I-


H'M! GRACE LUCAS HASN'T DONE WELL THIS TIME, HAS SHE? EVEN THE TEA NOT PROPERLY ORGANIZED. WONDER WHAT THE VISITORS THINK?
NOT MUCH, I'LL BE BOUND

I-I'M SORRY, MRS. BADGER, I'M AFRAID MY ARRANGEMENTS WERE AWFUL— BUT I'VE BEEN FEELING SO TIRED . . .
WELL, IF YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN HANDLE THE ENTERTAINING ANY MORE, MRS. LUCAS, WHY DON'T YOU SAY SO? I'M SURE THE OTHERS WILL BE WILLING TO TAKE YOUR TURNS

OH, JIM, IT WAS AWFUL. MY ARRANGEMENTS WERE A COMPLETE FLOP-AND EVERY ONE WAS SO C-CATTY. WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THIS DREADFUL TIREDNESS? I EVEN WAKE TIRED
I DO WISH YOU'D SEE THE DOCTOR, DEAR


AT THE DOCTOR'S
...EVEN WAKE TIRED, AFTER A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!
AH-THEN IT WASN'T A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP- IT WAS ONLY SURFACE SLEEP. YOU SEE, PSYCHOLOGY HAS TAUGHT US THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SLEEP, AS WELL AS DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE MIND. YOUR SLEEP MUST REACH DOWN INTO YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND IF YOU'RE TO WAKE UP REALLY REFRESHED. TAKE HORLICKS EVERY NIGHT. IT WILL HELP YOU GET THE PROFOUND SLEEP YOU NEED-ABSOLUTE REST FOR EVERY MUSCLE AND NERVE OF THE MIND AND BODY

I COULD HAVE WEPT AT THAT AWFUL TEA PARTY! BUT I **COULDN'T**. THINGS PROPERLY-I ALWAYS TIRED. I **EVEN** WOKE TIRED AF OR 9 HOURS' SLEEP! I **AM** GL SAW THE DOCTOR FOR HE TOLD ME ABOUT HOW SLEEP SHOULD REACH RIGHT DOWN INTO YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND, RESTING EVERY PART OF YOU. HE ADVISED HORLICKS AND-WELL, IT PUT PAID TO MY TIREDNESS! IT MADE A DIFFERENT WOMAN OF ME!

HORLICKS

EDITORIAL

Let common sense decide the "controls" battle

DURING THE PRESENT session of Parliament, there is certain to be a lively—even bitter—battle over the question of "controls." And it will be a great pity if this battle is allowed to confuse the real issue, which is not whether one party or another shall have greater power over the people, but whether our method of government (which we all accept in principle) shall be modernized to enable it to cope swiftly with the complexities of present-day conditions.

It is not really a party political argument at all. What is happening is that an attempt is at last being made to adapt British democratic procedure to the needs of the time.

In the days of the Fascist dictators —who, of course, did not bother about democratic procedure but simply ordered or dictated what they wanted, without regard to the feelings or wishes of their peoples—it was frequently said that the democracies, especially Britain, were "too slow."

Today, we face new perils. Quite apart from the war with Communism, be it "cold" or "hot," we are trying to maintain our national finances, keep our end up and ensure that our people are as well fed, housed and supplied as possible in a world which has become an economic jungle.

We are not doing so badly, either.

BUT it becomes more and more evident that a much greater degree of speed and flexibility is needed to deal with everything that happens.

This is what the argument is about. How much power should be delegated in detail—how much should still be exercised only with the *preliminary* approval of Parliament?

Sitting in its two chambers for so many days a week, Parliament cannot possibly keep a close enough check on everything that Ministers must do. Nowadays it cannot pass judgment on all their actions in advance.

Even if this were physically possible it would not be desirable, because urgent decisions would be delayed. So the modern trend, which has galloped forward since the war, is for Parliament to make decisions mainly on policy.

Therefore, Acts of Parliament are today more and more often declarations of policy and less and less concrete sets of rules and propositions (though, of course, some Acts of the old type are still necessary as well).

The new-type Acts—and this is the vital point—include permission to Ministers to take action according to their own judgment along the lines of policy which the Act itself lays down. Those decisions take the form of Orders and Regulations (known as "controls") and therefore really represent legislation at second-hand.

Rationing is only one form of control. There are many others. Permits to import goods from abroad or to export them to foreign countries are controls—and they have proved to be most necessary in Britain's struggle to balance her overseas trade.

Powers exercised by the Treasury over citizens' transactions in foreign exchange and over new share issues, are controls.

All these are powers wielded by the Government with the consent of *but without the direct supervision of* Parliament.

VIOLENT controversy arises about these controls for two reasons.

The first is that nobody likes interference with his private affairs—and that is precisely what controls are designed to do in the interests of the community as a whole.

The second is a political and constitutional objection. Many people think that if Ministers are entrusted —with no more than remote control over their actions—with such far-reaching powers in perpetuity, they may abuse them. Indeed, it is feared that they might, if a misguided and malicious Government won power, somehow extend their right to impose controls so as to cut out Parliamentary restraint on themselves altogether.

That of course would mean the end of democratic Parliamentary government as we understand and want it.

But there are already some substantial safeguards, and in the present political struggle over controls, much will depend on the degree of Parliamentary safeguards which the Government is prepared to legislate for. It cannot afford to give Parliament so much obstructive power that the machinery of modern government may be made unworkable—nor can it afford to leave too much power in the hands of individual Ministers.

We must have the controls made necessary by world conditions, but we must never let them break down the Parliamentary checks and restraints of our free democracy. That is the challenge—and the test.

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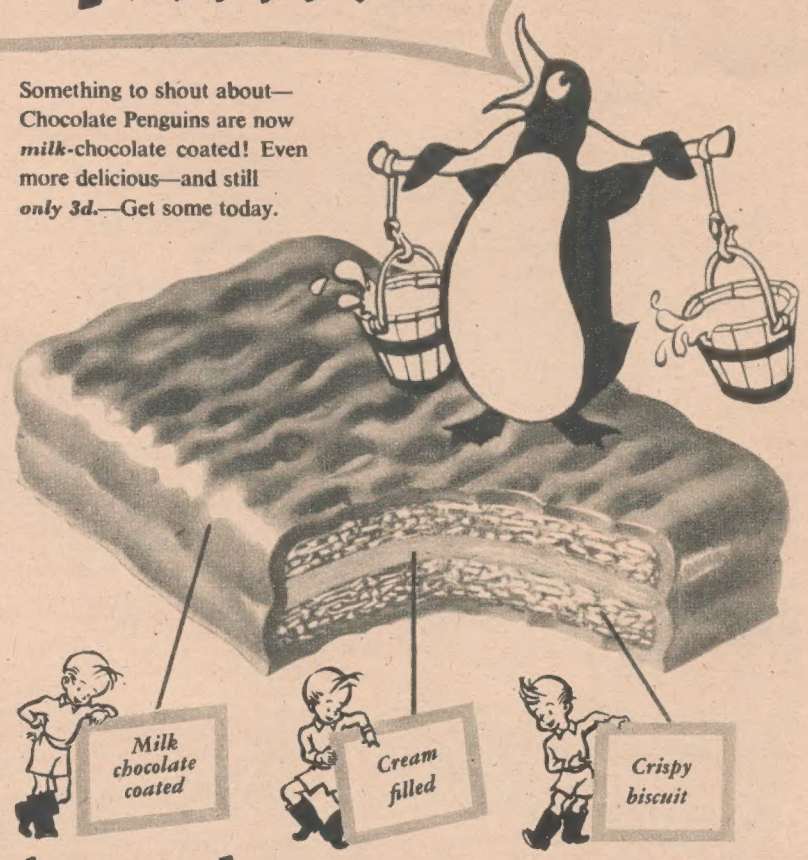

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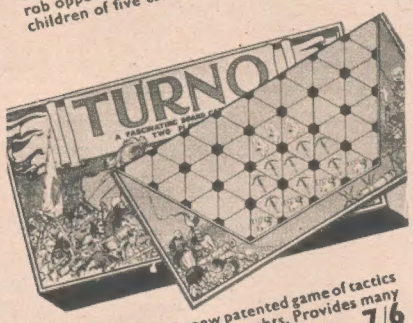

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FREE SPEECH

He found a happy factory

AT THE FACTORY where I worked until a few months ago, the employees were always grumbling about conditions of work and poor pay. When the firm's last annual report was published they found that the previous year's profit had been doubled. But their own pay and conditions did not improve.

Because I disliked working in this atmosphere of discontent and resented as much as anyone the firm's mean attitude, I kept my ears open and eventually transferred to my present job. I am doing the same kind of work—making precision instruments—but in a light, airy factory among a grand team. And I *do* mean a team—from the manager down. Before changes are made, the people who will be affected are consulted and their ideas thoughtfully considered. Every bright idea that is adopted is rewarded with a bonus. Incentive is terrific and production per man is way and above anything I have ever seen. The result is not only a firm which prospers but a team of men and women who take a pride in their work.—J. G., Coventry.

Veterans Need Refresher

CRITICIZING CIVIL DEFENCE training, L. G. M., of Eastbourne ("Free Speech," November 4) fails to say where he received the treatment he describes. After five years even the most efficient veteran is a bit "rusty" on some subjects. Also, there are many new subjects which were never taught in C.D. before. As old and new members have got to work together if there is a war, it is impracticable and inadvisable for the two groups to train separately. We find that the better type of veteran is only too pleased to assist the instructor by passing on to the "rookies" the valuable lessons he has learnt by bitter experience.—A. H. JACKSON (Civil Defence Training Officer), Town Hall, Eastbourne, Sussex.

. . . Volunteering for Civil Defence in 1941 after being invalided out of the R.A.F. with fourteen years' service, I received the same kind of treatment as L. G. M. recently received. I thought that the training, lectures and experience I had had would prove useful. Instead, I was lectured by inexperienced boys and girls on the use of the stirrup pump. Most lecture evenings became mothers' tea and biscuit parties; civil defence itself was little more than a fancy-dress parade. With lectures by men of practical and up-to-date experience the C.D. Corps could have been one hundred per cent more efficient.—D. J. HUGHES-MORGAN, Green Pond Cottage, Tenby, Pembrokeshire.

They Called Her "Cockeye"

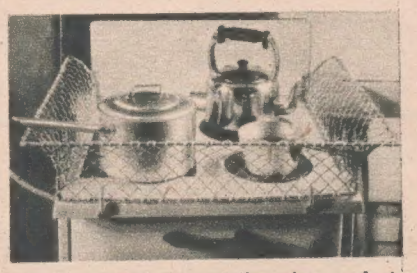
I COULD VIVIDLY REMEMBER looking in the mirror and covering up my cross-eye when I read Jon Cleary's story, "Hero's Reward" (JOHN BULL, November 4). When I was a little girl I wore a shade and was always called "Cockeye." It made me want to melt into the ground. When I was fifteen I plucked up enough courage to have an operation, as I realized that, with one eye in the corner, I might never get a husband. Now my eyes are perfectly straight. My husband, though, assures me he would have loved me just the same if I had not had the operation, so I don't feel such a heroine after all.—MRS. M. C., Leicester.

The Repairs Racket

WE MAY GRUMBLE AT THE COST of shoe repairs but we do at least know what we are paying for. This is not so with watch and radio repairs—if you know nothing about their workings you are at the repairer's mercy. It is a pity that some kind of price control is not enforced to help stop the unexpected and often unnecessary costs of radio replacements and the high charges for very minor watch repairs—or, worse, not genuine repairs at all.—A. C. PORTER, 10 St. Pauls Road, Salisbury, Wilts.

Why Inventors Don't Invent

INVENTORS HAVE NEGLECTED the field of safety gadgets in the modern home, C. Turner ("Free Speech," October 28) complains. Perhaps my experiences will explain why. After watching the antics of my small son around the cooker I invented a simple wire-mesh safety guard. The Leeds Home Safety Committee was very pleased with the idea; the National Safety Committee in



Cooker guard—a reader's safety gadget

London was also greatly impressed by it. The guard was displayed at an exhibition last year in the Central Hall, Westminster, and the outcome was a mention in the B.B.C.'s *Radio Newsreel* and photographs in the national papers. Meanwhile, I filed an application with the Patent Office. Manufacturers became interested and I said I was willing to let them adopt the idea, but now, many months later, I am still waiting for news.—J. J., Leeds.

Housewife Back At School

NOT LONG AGO MY BRAIN used to be quite addled and I felt that I was in a rut, like "Housewife" ("Free Speech," October 28), who wrote that she would like a new career. But I took advantage of the L.C.C. further education scheme and started taking lessons in French and advanced cookery. Now I look forward to going back to school on two afternoons every week. — MRS. A. S., Richmond, Surrey.

. . . I find that bringing up children is a full-time career and gives me plenty of mental stimulus. As for spare time, preparing appetizing meals and mending and darning for my three boys keeps *me* busy.—MOTHER, Bradford, Yorks.

Road Safety Rule Book

TASMANIA HAS AN IDEA for road safety that could be tried here. Schoolchildren are issued with cards containing printed safety rules and spaces for endorsement by policemen and responsible citizens who notice the bearer breaking these rules. From time to time schoolteachers examine the cards; if any remarks have been entered the teacher lectures the offenders on their carelessness. This idea seems to be sound, especially if some sort of incentive were added for "clean" cards.—P. D. D. FORDYCE, 24 Lynton Avenue, Jarrow-on-Tyne, Co. Durham.

Matelots' Favourite

JEAN, JOAN, BARBARA AND MARJORIE, the announcers of *Forces' Favourites*—there was Georgina, too, I believe—certainly had their legs pulled by men who used Service slang in their record requests ("Jean Metcalfe — Family Favourite," November 4). Sometimes, though, I think the girls collaborated in legpulls, as, for instance, when one of them announced that "the following record has been requested by six matelots of H.M.S. *So-and-So* to be dedicated to the chief gunner's mate." The chief gunner's mate was the most morose man who ever bullied a gun crew. And the record? "I'll Never Smile Again." — JESSE PEARCE, 106 Copnor Road, Portsmouth.

Tonic On The Doorstep

THOUGH I KNOW NOTHING of the hygienic value of "stoning" steps ("Free Speech," November 4), let's keep this custom. As a mere man I find the sight of front steps fresh, white and gleaming is as good a tonic as any to the tired and jaded worker, homeward bound after a day's drag.—ROBERT THOMSON, 83 Sandyfaulds Street, Glasgow.

. . . After almost six years of "stoning" in order to brighten up the surroundings, I hit on the idea of painting the step and window ledges. I chose red, which looks bright and clean. Now all I have to do is simply wipe the step and ledges with a damp cloth.—MRS. ELSIE NICHOLSON, 5 Cunliffe Terrace, Manningham, Bradford, Yorks.

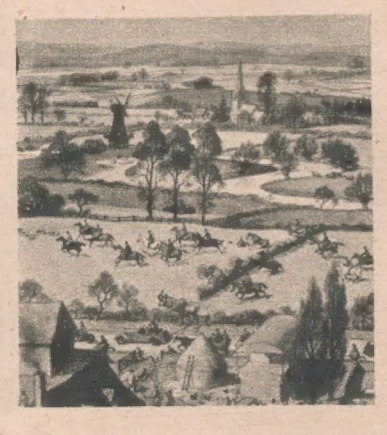
Breakfast-time Bachelor

BECAUSE I HAVE TO RISE at six o'clock, I don't see why my wife should have to also. I've often heard women say: "No matter how early my husband goes out, I always get up and cook his breakfast." But during our eight years of married life I've always cooked my own breakfast during the working week. I don't mind doing it at all—in fact, I thoroughly enjoy my hour as a bachelor husband.—A. C., Southampton.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address are in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

RONALD LAMPITT says: "As an artist, I think that the colour and movement of the hunt breaking the sombre winter landscape is a fine subject for a painting—whatever my views may be on hunting as a sport. Though I've watched a few hunts around the Cotswolds, I confess that the greater part of my knowledge of hunting comes from studying old sporting prints. They always delight me."



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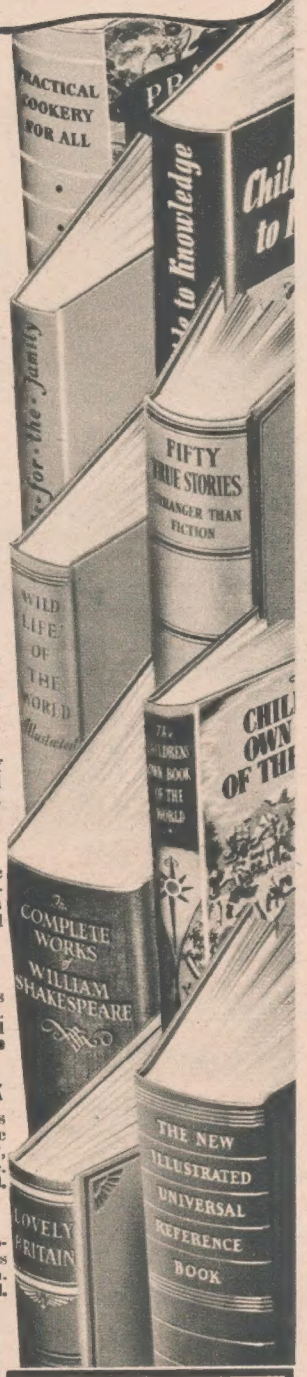

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but it wasn't always so—only a short while ago every day was a dismal affair for both of us . . .

I'd leave for work without so much as a word of 'goodbye'. She often had a headache and was depressed . . .

One morning I mentioned it to a friend in the office. He recommended that she tried "YEAST-VITE" Tablets—said he and his wife were never without them . . .

I bought a bottle on my way home and persuaded my wife to try them.

Now she knows how to get rid of headaches and is happier in every way . . .

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YANGTSE INCIDENT

Second serial part of the epic new book by LAWRENCE EARL

The Communists began to fire on the whaler carrying *Amethyst's* wounded. The water was pocked with speeding bullets. Then a shell burst nearby

Man the whaler!

Aground on a mudbank, the crippled H.M.S. Amethyst was at the mercy of the Communist guns. Only one desperate hope was left

THE GUNS of the Chinese Communists, hidden on the north bank of the Yangtse River, had been devastatingly effective. Fifteen minutes after the first shell struck H.M.S. *Amethyst*, on that fateful morning of April 20, 1949, she lay aground and crippled off Rose Island, her captain, Lieutenant-Commander Skinner, mortally wounded.

For a while after *Amethyst* grounded there was a state of some confusion aboard her. In the wheelhouse, Lieutenant Weston, now virtually in command, spoke urgently to Leading Seaman Leslie Frank. "We're aground. Get a party up on the bridge and bring the captain and the other wounded to a safer place."

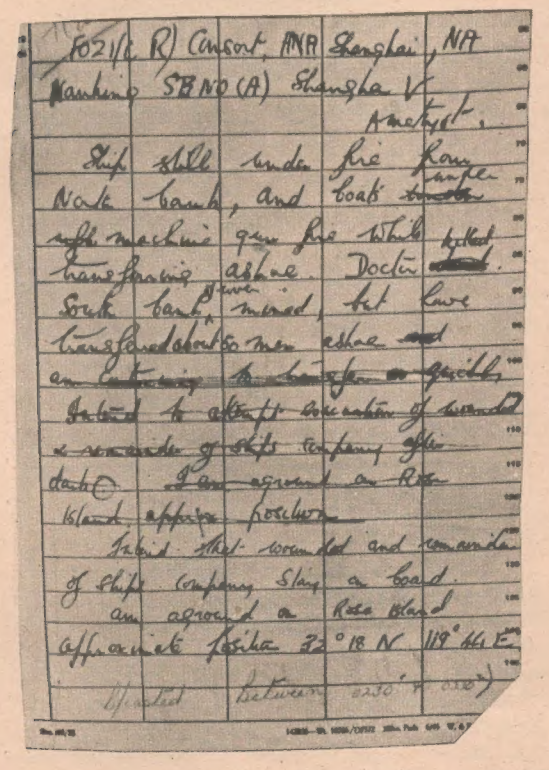
Frank collected the first six able-bodied men he could find and with them fetched the wounded from the bridge and the wheelhouse down to the after messdeck. Shells were hitting the ship all the time. There seemed to be a great deal of running to and fro on the decks and passageways.

X-gun, firing independently, had got away thirty rounds. Boy Dennis Roberts, a Plymouth lad, had taken cover underneath the Bofors gun on the port side, just behind the funnel. He was looking aft when he saw the blinding, yellow flash of a hit on the X-gun flare. Leading Seaman Thomas Mullins was blown clean off the gun platform on to the deck by the blast. He was, almost miraculously, unhurt. He jumped back on to the gun.

Several ratings were handing out ammunition to supply the gun. The automatic hoist wasn't working. Roberts later reported: "I saw a second shell burst directly on X-gun then, and shrapnel flew around like hail." That second hit on the gun killed Ordinary Seaman Dennis Griffiths and Ordinary Seaman Charles Battams, X-gun's trainer. Shrapnel wounded Albert Rimmington, Amos Davies and Gwilyn Stevens. One of the men was killed where he sat, his hands frozen to the training handle. He seemed to be still on the job. "Train around!" Mullins yelled at him. "Train around!" Then Mullins saw that the man was dead.

A cloud of black smoke shrouded X-gun and it was now out of action for good. None of

Lieut. Geoffrey Weston, D.S.C. He took over command when *Amethyst's* captain was wounded



Amethyst's message pad—a vivid record of the turmoil that followed the bombardment

Amethyst's four-inch guns could now be brought to bear on the Communist battery of 75- and 105-millimetre guns. If her position had been desperate before, it was now surely impossible. She was stuck fast. Neither A- nor B-guns were of any use. And X-gun was wrecked.

The buzz went around the ship. "Our only chance is *Consort*. If she pulls us off the mud we can make a run for it."

Meanwhile, crew members had been issued with Bren guns and other small arms. It was while Wilkinson was helping to distribute these that a shell landed near him. Wilkinson heard what he afterwards called "a terrific bang. I felt as if someone had clouted me on the back of the head. My first reaction was to turn round and clout him back. Then I passed out."

Boy Keith Martin went forward after X-gun was hit and there somebody gave him a rifle. He took cover in the small shipwright's shop, poking his head and shoulders out of the door so he could fire his rifle. He was shooting at no special target on the north shore—just shooting, almost by reflex action. Somebody yelled: "Repel boarders if they come;" It was Weston, who, with the entire ship's company, momentarily expected the Communists to come alongside in boats as a logical follow-up to their attack.

Shortly after, somebody told Martin to help the wounded on the quarterdeck. He was giving one of the wounded a drink of water when a shell hit the quarterdeck and, suddenly, he couldn't see. He was flat on the deck with all the breath knocked out of him. He tried to open his eyes after a time and, at first very dimly, then more clearly, he saw men jumping over the side into the swift current of the river. He decided, correctly, that someone had given an order to evacuate the ship. He slipped over into the water himself, almost without thinking. He didn't know then that he was badly wounded in the left thigh.

Smell Of Burned Flesh

Weston, making a round of the ship at shortly after ten, found X-gun abandoned. A few bodies were lying around the gun. There was a small fire nearby and the deck was smouldering and one of the bodies was burning. He told Able Seaman Mulley to get a Foamite—a small fire extinguisher—and, with Mulley's help, Weston put the fire out with it. The ship smelled strongly and acridly of burned powder and burned flesh.

"Start getting some boats lowered," Weston told Berger, "in case I decide to evacuate the ship. Besides, it will keep the lads busy. It's no use asking them just to wait around until they're killed."

After the effort of putting the fire out, Weston began to feel very faint. He knew that if he didn't sit down he would collapse. Finally, he sat down near the funnel on the port side of the upper deck. (For six weeks he had to sleep sitting up. He had shrapnel through his lung. One piece is still buried in his liver.) "Doc" Alderton and Tom Baker, the sickberth attendant, found Weston sitting there.

"Are you coughing blood, Geoff?" Alderton asked.

"A little."

"Well, that's the only thing to worry about—if you're coughing blood." He gave Weston a shot of morphia. He instructed a seaman to bandage Weston's wound.

Berger came along on the run. "Doc," he said, "Mirehouse needs attention on the after flat." Mirehouse was tall and dark. He was an old Harrovian, and his fellow officers referred to him good-naturedly as "Sir Richard, the impoverished aristocrat," because he was always borrowing shirts. A shell had hit some storage batteries near which Mirehouse had been lying wounded on a stretcher, and his face had been painfully sprayed with acid.

"Doc" Alderton and Baker finished up with Weston and hurried towards the after flat. They never reached Mirehouse: a minute later they

THE THREE VITAL HITS

were both dead. They had walked straight into a bursting shell. . . .

At about half-past ten Hett instructed Petty Officer Henry Freeman and Leading Seaman Frank to get a wire ready astern *Amethyst* so they would be ready to be towed off by *Consort* when she came.

Frank and Freeman went aft to the starboard side of the quarterdeck and uncovered the hawser wheel. Small-arms fire was whistling around them like jet-propelled wasps and ricocheting off steel bulkheads with suddenly angrier, higher-pitched whines. The two grabbed the end of the wire and crawled along the quarterdeck, pulling the wire with them. They fastened it in place, but by the time they were finished the small-arms fire was getting to be intolerably heavy. They made a quick dash for the protected space between the depth-charge racks.

Wiping the sweat from their faces, they grinned sickly at one another. The racks were covered with canvas and Frank and Freeman were counting on the depth-charges under the canvas to stop the bullets. After a moment or two, Frank said: "Is there anything in these racks, Harry? I seem to remember we fired some depth-charges not so long ago."

Freeman stopped grinning. "Let's have a look." Frank lifted a canvas cover and dropped it back quickly. He was pale. There was nothing under the canvas. The pair had been hiding behind the bare canvas expecting it to stop the Communist bullets.

"Where do we go from here, Les?" Freeman asked.

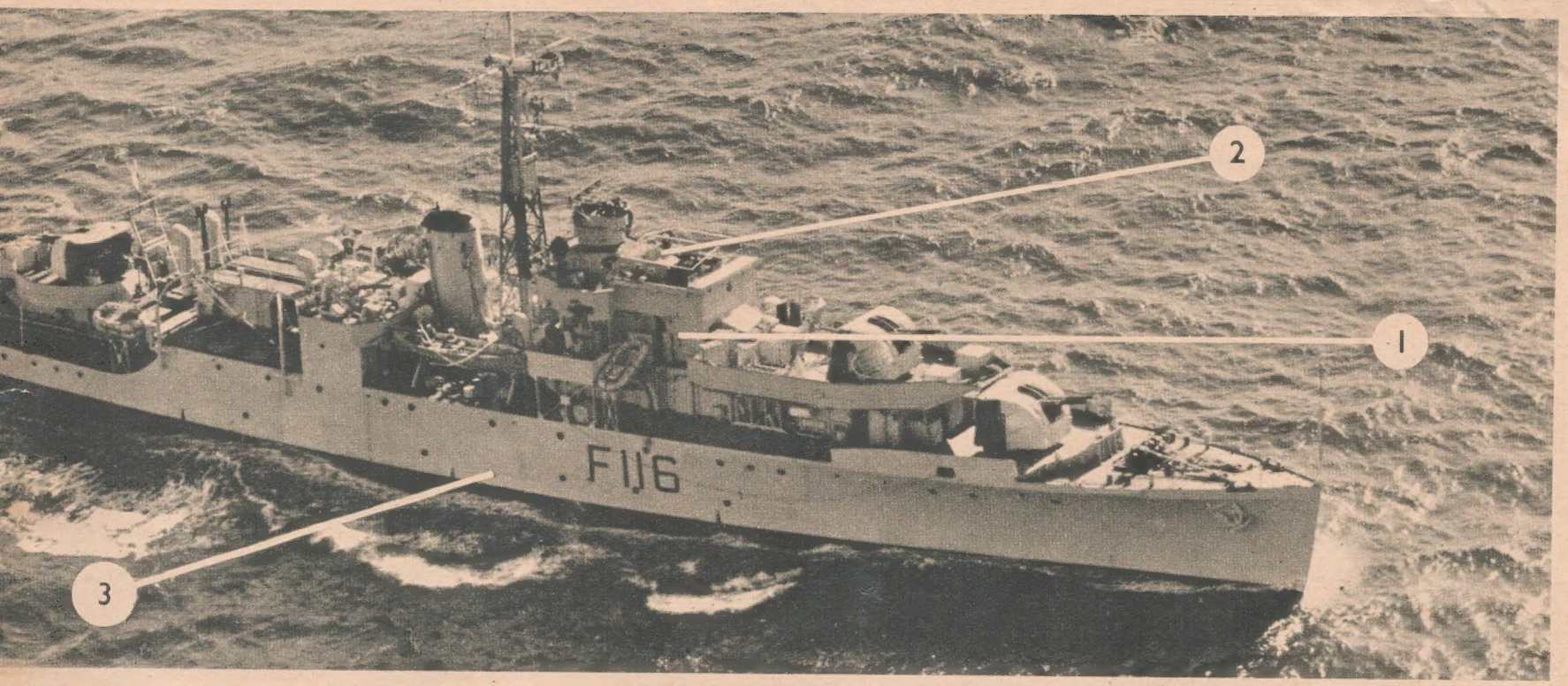
"Make a dash."

Fired On Truce Flag

Freeman went first. When Frank saw him safely at the far end of the quarterdeck he sprinted the forty or fifty feet of open deck to join him. They stood there together, breathing hard. Then Frank reported that the wire was ready for *Consort* to pull them out of the mud as soon as she arrived.

Weston conferred with Berger. "Get the ship's company ashore," Weston said, "but leave a steaming party aboard." Weston felt sure, now, that the Communists intended to keep on firing until they reduced the ship to wreckage.

Weston was still sitting on the deck near the funnel. A white sheet of truce was flying overhead. It had been ordered up by Skinner. A little later the Communists started to rake the



Disaster came swiftly to *Amethyst*. The first shell, striking the wheelhouse (1), caused the frigate to head for a mudbank. A minute later, *Amethyst's* captain was wounded when shells hit the bridge (2). Soon after, a hit on the low power room (3) stilled *Amethyst's* guns at a critical moment

deck with machine gun fire. Weston, feeling quite ill, heard somebody nearby swearing. "The bastards!" Somebody else said, "They'll have something to say about this at home."

Weston crawled into the little radar office for better cover. After a while, Lieutenant G. B. Strain, the flotilla electrical officer and not actually a member of *Amethyst's* company (he had been taken on board at Shanghai as a passenger for Nanking), found Weston there and helped him into the wireless office. Weston sat down gratefully in a canvas-bottomed chair.

Over The Side!

It was not much before eleven o'clock on that hectic morning that Berger, tall, black-haired and angular, moved around the ship yelling: "Swimmers over the side. Non-swimmers man the whaler."

This evacuation order pulled the trigger on considerable activity. It is laid down in the Royal Navy that under such circumstances all code books and coding machines must be destroyed. Hett, visiting the wireless office, instructed French, Cook and Crocker to collect the code books. Then, while Hett burned the books in the galley stove, the others broke the machines into pieces with mallets and heavy spanners and threw the pieces into the Yangtse.

Stoker Mechanic Bannister, who was wounded, remembers being carried by Brown and Muldoon and being helped into the whaler. Muldoon was later killed. Monaghan took charge of the whaler and four uninjured men manned the oars. They approached the south shore of the river. When the whaler was only a few yards from the bank, the Communists began firing on it. The water was pocked with speeding bullets. There was a scramble in the whaler as the men in it reached for the bank, and suddenly, when a shell burst nearby, it capsized. Wounded and unwounded struggled together in the water. The unhurt helped the others to the bank and then up it, but Bannister somehow was overlooked. He found himself alone in the water.

A moment later Bannister saw the back of Stoker-Mechanic Fred Morrey's head appear over the crown of the bank. "Morrey!" he croaked. "For God's sake, Morrey!"

Morrey, a small, ginger-haired chap, himself twice wounded in the back, turned his head. With Ordinary Seaman Tom Townsend, he crawled back a few feet through the tall grass to the lip of the bank. "Come on, Paddy," Morrey said. "We'll give you a hand up." At that moment Bannister realized he could move neither his arms nor his hands. They seemed paralysed. He pushed his way with his legs until he could lean against the steep bank. "That's it, Paddy," Morrey said, and reached down with one hand and cupped it under Bannister's chin. Townsend reached down and cupped a palm under the other side of his chin. They pulled Bannister up the bank that way. The pain in his chest was excruciating; but he was out of the water and with the others again.

Bannister, catching what breath he could, heard Monaghan say: "Keep to the path, men. There are minefields around us." Bannister found that he could now work his arms a little. He crawled forward on his knees and his elbows and followed the six or seven others in the party who were crawling in single file along the sunken path. The high grass gave some cover. Bannister was breathing on only one lung and the pain was getting much worse. His wounds had started to bleed again. He slowed down. The others drew farther away. After a while he looked back over his shoulder and saw another, larger, party coming up behind him. One of the men found him lying, twisted in pain, in the deep grass.

"Can I give you a hand, mate?"

"I'm all right," Bannister said. "I'll follow on behind."

A Shattered Dream

One by one the others passed him. He felt very weak, and the effect of morphia was wearing off. He rested there in the high grass, biting on the roots to kill the pain and trying to get some strength back. Then he tried to crawl again, inch by inch, on his elbows.

When he looked up, young Morrey was crawling back down the path towards him, grinning encouragement. "Follow on behind me, Paddy," Morrey said. Bannister tried, but the gap between them widened. Six feet. Nine feet. Twelve feet. After a while, he gasped: "Go ahead, mate. I'll rest here a little while." Morrey, who didn't hear him, kept on crawling. Bannister rested.

It was a lovely, sunny morning. After a while he started to dream. The sky was very blue and he could see nothing else over the tall, waving grass. Firing had stopped. He thought he was somewhere else, somewhere far away in the countryside near Belfast on holiday and just lying in the sun. Then he heard the shooting break out again and the beautiful bubble of his dream burst and he began to crawl again. He could not see any of his mates. He could hear nothing but the firing. After crawling for what seemed to be several hours but could not actually have been more than ten minutes, he heard voices.

He forced himself up and peered over the grass. Petty Officer Heath was kneeling in the grass only fifteen feet away. He was waving his arms to someone across the quarter-mile wide arm of the Yangtse that divided Rose Island from the south bank of the river. Moved by some quick instinct, Heath turned his head. "Come on, Bannister," he said. With some difficulty, Bannister crawled the fifteen feet.

With The Nationalists

A sampan, manned by a coolie, was coming towards them across the stretch of water. Some of the others helped Bannister aboard and the sampan started back across to the south bank. Bannister saw Nationalist soldiers standing there in trenches, holding their rifles at the ready. Up river, two more sampans were crossing over. Each was carrying several *Amethyst* men.

When they landed Bannister and the other wounded men were taken into huts occupied by the Nationalists. The wounded were stretched out on the floor and on the one double bed. Bannister sat on the floor, his knees hunched up in front of him. He felt more comfortable that way. Morrey, with two gaping holes in his back, was lying on the bed and grinning as if he were at home in Overton in the local with his cronies.

Two Chinese women, moving silently and solemnly, brought the wounded boiled water in pottery bowls. A Nationalist soldier came in and passed out trousers and jackets of padded felt. The clothes of the *Amethyst* men were wet and ripped. Bannister was given trousers to replace the rent, blood-soaked pair flapping about his legs. Somebody helped him put them on.

It was in this hut that Bannister first saw Boy Keith Martin. They had both joined the ship at Hongkong only a few days before and had not previously met. Bannister and Martin were the only two on stretchers. It gave them a feeling of kinship. Martin had a painful shrapnel wound on the outer side of his left thigh. He was about six feet tall and very slender. He had a round, shining, button face and a pug nose. He was

Continued on page 25

WALK TO KESWICK

by ***DUDLEY HOYS***

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

He might live a week, despite the pain, if the weather held. He hadn't bargained for the dog

She could hear Blayne's steel-shod feet

MOST OF US IN IREDALE knew that Joe Blayne was setting off for Keswick that November morning. For more than twenty years he had been going to the annual Tup Sale there, buying a few rams and staying a few days. He always walked both ways, and never booked a room in advance, reckoning to get put up by one of his many farmer friends in the district. This habit of his seemed harmless enough until disaster crashed down on him out of the blue. Then he realized the danger of it too late.

The fact is, the dalesfolk know the fells so well, we never give a thought to the possibility of them coming to grief. Accidents happen only to visitors, fell-walkers and rock-climbers. They can tumble off crags, or they can lose themselves, and die from exposure—easy enough in a wilderness so wide and high that the average southerner has no idea of its potential savagery.

The morning Joe Blayne was preparing to set off had a damp, muggy warmth about it, without a breath of wind, and the cloud was low. It had smeared itself in a ragged fringe along the fell-breast opposite Hollowstones, and he glanced across with slight disapproval in his light blue eyes. He was a quiet type, thin, straight-featured and about forty-five. Being a bachelor, he fought shy of packing. All he had was a packet of sandwiches, shaving gear, and a spare pair of socks. He rammed them in his pocket.

Tom Wilson, his hired man, came in from milking.

"You're off, then? Be back Sunday, likely?"

"Ay."

Tom filled his pipe. "I'm hoping there'll be nay bad news waiting for you."

Blayne cocked an inquisitive head. Tom said: "I were in Fox last night. George Dixon told me he'd had three ewes worried. He reckons there's a killer about."

This was serious news. A dog that turns killer on the fells can do desperate damage before it is caught and shot. Blayne said slowly: "Reckon it might be, Ay. But yon Dixon's over fond of getting scarey. Mebbe ewes was ailing—there's a deal of liver-fluke among his lot. Mebbe foxes found 'em and finished 'em off."

Tom nodded. "Mebbe. Anyways, he told me he'd set a trap near one of the dead ewes. Going up to look at it this morning, he was."

"Likely foxes," said Blayne, and swung his oilskin over his shoulder.

A small, elderly woman with a kind face and a worried expression was walking past up the dale road. Her hat and her costume stamped her unmistakably as a visitor.

Blayne said: "Who's yon? I've seen her before, with a dog."

"Yon's a sister of Miss Sharp, staying down at Fold End." Tom's eyes widened a little. "'Tis a gey big dog I've seen about with her."

"Ay, an Alsatian."

Tom said quietly: "Do you think it might be the killer? Them townsfolk is gey feckless with their dogs among the sheep."

Blayne's voice was dubious. "Mebbe. Likely not. Miss Sharp would warn her to be careful."

"There's nay dog with her this morning," pointed out Tom, warming to his theory. "Mebbe she lets it out on own. A girt beast like that could do wicked damage——"

Blayne cut him short with a laugh, and set off up the dale a hundred yards or so behind Miss Sharp's sister.

IT was not for him to know that nothing could have been more unwelcome to her than the sound of his steel-shod feet. She wanted to be alone, completely alone among the greyness of this upper dale. Misery and dread had her by the throat. Prince, her beloved Alsatian, had been missing since eleven o'clock yesterday morning. She had called and searched and hoped and prayed, and gone out again in the afternoon, and hunted around until she was nearly lost in the dusk. She had spent an agonized night, her ears straining for what never happened, the scratching of his paws at the cottage door.

This morning, something akin to terror gnawed at her, because a passing neighbour had dropped a gossipy remark to her sister about Dixon's worried sheep.

She could not, she would not, believe it of Prince. He was a dear, gentle, playful creature. He wouldn't even hurt a mouse. But at the back of her mind lurked the hideous possibility, and on account of that she dared not report that the dog was missing and ask for help in searching. Suppose Prince did happen to be playing with a sheep, and a farmer came upon him, and raised his gun, and——

The thought turned her sick. With the loneliness and starved affection of her kind, she had centred her life in Prince. She would willingly pay for a hundred dead sheep, if only she could get him back safe and sound. But it might be fatal if she let the dale know that Prince was missing. These people were merciless where sheep-worrying was concerned.

Aching to get out of human earshot and then keep crying out Prince's name, she diverged from the road along a track leading below the lower fell-breasts. Her mouth trembled with anxiety. Dread and beseeching prayer were in her eyes. She kept whispering: "Oh, please, God, let me find Prince!"

Still slightly curious, Blayne watched her go. Then, with the slow, stolid stride of his kind, he reached the base of the gully that brings the infant river down from Esk Hause. He ascended the first long rise, a sort of steep bank, squelchy in places, and from there took to the boulder-strewn stream-bed. He was thinking that this year he might buy half a dozen rams at Keswick. He would take gey good care they were free from scab. Last back-end some of them had been infected, and that had meant gathering the whole flock and dipping in mid-winter. He'd take gey good care. Ay.

He came to the final stretch of the scramble, where a wraith of a track rises from the stream-bed, snaking diagonally up a tilt of scree. Without warning a bit of rock slid from under his right foot. There was a stony, slithering noise. He grabbed at nothing, dropped six feet in a sliding rush, and hit a boulder. As he fell over sideways there was a noise like the snapping of a dry stick. Through his right leg, levered between the boulder and the weight of his body, flared red-hot pain. He lay there sweating, gritting his teeth, trying to fight down the torture of it. Despite the dominance of pain, his mind had already registered two certainties. He had broken his leg. And nobody might come this way for weeks, months.

HE attempted to move the leg an inch or two, to find some relief. The pain became greater, not less. He lay utterly still. The throbbing was feverish, and yet not quite so savage. He told himself he had got to face the fact that for days he would not be missed. His friends would merely tell each other that for once Joe had missed the sale. That was all. Likely nobody would start to worry about him until next Monday or Tuesday, when Tom would begin to wonder why he wasn't back.

Say six days here, like this, without food. A man could survive. He had those sandwiches. He would nibble a small bit each day. Ay, a

behind her. As she walked, she prayed desperately to herself. She had to be alone, completely alone

man could survive a week or more, despite this pain. That is, unless the weather changed.

An upsurge of flaming pain sent him dizzy. It sapped the vitality out of him, dragged him into a kind of coma. With his head resting against the hardness of rock, he drifted for a while through time, and forgot everything. His awakening to the cloudy world was slow and dim. He became aware of the eternal water noises, and the blaring of a sheep high on Esk Pike. Another sound asserted itself. He turned his eyes and saw an animal with brownish-golden coat and the shape of a wolf moving towards him among the boulders.

He blinked, and the creature was still visible. This time he recognized it as a large dog, and reckoned immediately that it was the killer of Dixon's sheep. It was approaching him slowly, in an awkward, lurching fashion, and whimpering a little.

BLAYNE'S fingers, which had tightened around a loose chunk of rock, relaxed. He recognized the animal as the Alsatian he had seen with Miss Sharp's sister. There was no threat about it. It limped on three legs. The fourth held clear of the ground, ended in a reddened mess. Blayne stretched out his hand, and the Alsatian thrust its muzzle forward, nosed his palm, and slumped down beside him.

"What's wrong with paw?" said Blayne.

The bushy tail flagged slightly, brushing the ground.

It came to Blayne that the dog was thin and hungry. Here was no killer, or it would have been gorged and swollen. It had fine, sorrowful eyes, and the soft look of a dog brought up as a pet.

Blayne said: "I doubt you've some fancy name. I'll call you Gyp."

His fingers ran along the sensitive leg. The dog yelped, but made no attempt to snap at him. He held up what was left of the paw. It ended in a chewed stump, the pad and claws missing. Bits of sharp grit and the spike of a whin were sticking to the rawness. Blayne brushed them away gently, and the dog yelped, and licked his hand.

"We're both in a bad way, Gyp," Blayne nodded. He reckoned he knew what had happened. The dog had blundered into the toothed trap set by Dixon and bitten itself free. But it was no killer. Nay. More likely it played with children and slept on cushions.

That paw was best left alone. The dog's tongue would heal it quickest, that and the air.

Blayne was no sentimentalist. But the presence of the dog gave him a sort of comfort. It was something to talk to, something warm and friendly among the half-blind wetness of stone all around. He groped for the oilskin, pulled out one sandwich from the package, and broke it in two. One half he nibbled himself, very slowly. The other he fed to the dog, in tiny pieces. It took them gently, swallowed them as if they were air, and watched him.

At intervals throughout the afternoon he shouted, and the dog howled with him. But no one answered.

Night brought a hint of coldness. The warmth of the dog pressing against him was welcome. He slid into an uneasy sleep. What roused him, in the washy dimness of dawn, was the growling of Gyp and the blaring of sheep.

He opened his eyes, stared up at the sharp slopes of Esk Pike. Scuttling among that vagueness were two Herdwick ewes. Behind them loped a sheepdog, and by its queer-shaped, square head he knew it to be Fleet, the best of Dixon's half dozen. In those moments he had the hope that Dixon himself must be around.

Something unusual in the dog's movements made Blayne's eyes narrow and glint. It raced up to the side of one of the sheep, and clicked its fangs into the woolly shoulder. The sheep blared and veered. The dog rushed in again.

Blayne could see no more. Cloud and the scattered boulders hid everything else from view. But he had seen enough. The killer was Fleet. Once in a rare while some of these sheepdogs took to it. Days passed before they were ever suspected. A trusted dog that had the run of the farm would go out before dawn, and kill, and come back long before the menfolk were up.

Gyp stopped growling and licked his paw. Blayne raised himself on one elbow. He was stiff and aching, and the broken leg had a hot savagery about it.

He wondered, after a while, if the Alsatian could find its way back. That led him to the idea of sending a message. He had a bit of string in his pocket, and a pencil. It took a deal of wrenching before he had torn a strip from his grey flannel shirt. He licked the lead, and with difficulty printed the words BROKEN LEG ESK HAUSE, JOE BLAYNE. The strip he knotted tightly to the string, and tied it around the dog's neck.

"You can limp back. Ay." He raised his voice in harsh command, and made a threatening gesture. "Go home! Do you hear me? Go away! Go home!"

The dog flinched, retreated a few yards, and sat and watched him.

"Go away! Go home!" He threw a stone at it.

Gyp whimpered, limped off a few more yards, stopped, and stared at him with sorrowful eyes.

"Go away!"

Blayne tried for a long time before he admitted the uselessness of it. Then he laughed a trifle shakily.

"You're a fool. But you're faithful, like."

Gyp began to creep back towards him in fits and starts, halting nervously, his eyes beseeching. Ten minutes must have passed before he dared to nuzzle Blayne's hand. Blayne smiled in an almost affectionate way, curved his arm over Gyp's back and patted his flanks. "Ay, you're a fool. But there's summat about you."

The day dragged on. At intervals he again yelled for help, and the dog howled. After every bout of noise the silence was stressed by the water sounds. Blayne thought of Keswick, the busy streets, the buses, of his friends having a cheery crack and raising their glasses in his favourite inn.

That dusk he shared the third and last sandwich with the dog. His broken leg still flared viciously at the least effort to crawl. And something in the air warned him that the weather was turning.

PREMONITION proved true. He woke up shivering. It was false dawn, light enough to show the shapes of boulders, dim enough to haze clear outline. The sheen on the rock was different, blanched crystal instead of dampness.

The warmth of Gyp was missing. The loss was a greater shock than he cared to admit. With relief he turned his head in the direction of soft scuffling, to see that Gyp had gone down to the water to drink. There was ice at its edges.

He murmured grimly: "You'll need all your warmth to keep yourself alive."

Gyp was walking back towards him, wolf-like in the dimness. Out of the corner of his left eye, Blayne caught a flicker of movement. Up there, on a steep tilt, perched the blurred figure of a man. He had a gun to his shoulder, taking aim. The barrel was pointing straight at the dog.

There was no time to yell. In blinding agony, Blayne lurched to his knees, flung himself forward, sprawled his body chest downwards across the dog. At the same time the rocks echoed and the flesh of his left forearm quivered under the bite of the bullet.

Dixon came rushing down, eyes horrified. Blayne looked up at him with a ghost of a smile.

"Dog's nay killer. I'll tell you later. Get me home," he murmured. Then he fainted. THE END

Monty Butt and Phillip Hammond check the clearing of some of the Gold Coast's infected cocoa trees. It is a race against time. Men are there in thousands.

Cocoa-land killer is on the run

by IAN BEVAN

It's been a dramatic fight on the Gold Coast. Now victory is in sight in the battle against ignorance, prejudice—and the mealybug

ACCRA, GOLD COAST

YAW SABENG is a thin, desiccated little man—black, for he is a West African; illiterate, for he has never had need to read or write; and well-to-do, for he is a cocoa farmer owning sixteen acres of land in the best cocoa-growing country in the world.

Unlike most of his countrymen, Yaw Sabeng rarely smiles. He always seems worried, and he was never more worried than the morning when he walked the six miles from his village into the nearby town of Koforidua, and knocked on the door of the district agricultural officer.

"Excuse, please, master," he said. The harassed A.O. looked up from a desk already loaded with problems to face yet another. Yaw Sabeng's cocoa trees were dying and he wanted to know what the white man could do to help him. The African gave strange evidence of his plight—evidence which was to prove vital in avoiding a national disaster.

Cocoa trees had been dying from one cause or another ever since they were introduced into the Gold Coast from South America in the 1870s, but many more had lived than died, and the Gold Coast had quickly become the world's biggest cocoa producer. In fact, during 1936, the year Yaw Sabeng went to see the agricultural officer, Gold Coast production rose to a record 305,000 tons, which was almost half the world's total.

But on Yaw Sabeng's farm more trees were dying than living, although his land was among the best on the Coast and he knew how to take care of it. He was not only a good farmer but, in his way, an amateur scientist, for he had noticed that the shoots from his dying trees often showed a slight swelling which he had never seen on his healthy ones.

He had brought some of these shoots to the A.O. Could they, he asked, have anything to do with the trees dying? A plant pathologist came to Yaw Sabeng's farm and had a look at the trees. Within a few days an official correspondence had started which was to grow into the biggest file in the Gold Coast's history, and the heading of the first letter gave British agriculturalists a tag for one of the hardest problems they have been called upon to solve: "The case of the swollen shoots." The disease which was killing Yaw Sabeng's valuable trees was soon found to be widespread. It was killing trees in thousands throughout the eastern provinces (where most of the country's best cocoa was grown); yet no one knew exactly what the disease was or how it went from tree to tree. Before they found the answers, trees were dying in millions and the Gold Coast's cocoa industry faced extinction. The killer moved so fast that it was doubted whether anything could be done in time to save the country's basic export crop.

Not until a few weeks ago did anyone dare to claim that victory was possible. Even then, R. L. Brooks, secretary to the Gold Coast Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, would only venture this comment: "We know now that the fight *can* be won, but it will need thousands of men, millions of pounds, and unremitting effort over a long period. In fact, unless we learn more about swollen shoot, cocoa farmers will never be able to drop their guard."

The fight is worth waging, the price worth paying, for cocoa in the Gold Coast means big money. Currently selling in world markets at about £300 a ton, it will bring the colony this year a net income of more than £50,000,000. Better still, it earns the sterling bloc upwards of 100,000,000 dollars a year, as Americans eat more chocolate than anyone else, and the United States buys more than a third of the Gold Coast's crop.

On The Track Of The Mealybug

First move in the war against the killer was to find out the true nature of swollen shoot. The original guess was that it was a bacterial infection. Later, someone decided it was due to lack of proper shade and farmers were encouraged to plant new types of shade trees. But the killer kept advancing, and British prestige slipped as guess after guess proved wide of the mark.

Finally, after two years' intensive work, Adrian Posnette, a young British botanist in the colony's Department of Agriculture, proved that swollen shoot was a virus disease—the hardest of all types of plant infection for man to combat. Next step was to find how the virus was spread, and

But the mealybugs are there in millions

Posnette, after a couple more years, again came up with the answer. Just as malaria is carried from person to person by mosquitoes, swollen shoot, he found, is carried from tree to tree by mealybugs. In both cases it is the female of the species which does the damage, and, in the case of mealybugs, this is lucky for mankind, as the female bug has no wings and can't crawl more than a few feet. If she could fly like her male partner, she would be spreading swollen shoot faster and even farther afield than she is doing.

Mealybugs exist by the million in every part of the Gold Coast, and no one has been able to find any practical means of large-scale extermination. Every healthy cocoa tree may have a large number of mealybugs on it; their presence is harmless, but if one more arrives carrying the virus from an infected tree, then the healthy tree is doomed.

A mealybug, however, is only the carrier, not the originator of the trouble. Without diseased trees to provide the source of infection, all would be well. "As we can't get rid of the mealybugs," the scientists told the authorities, "the only thing to do is to get rid of the infected trees." And that is what the Department of Agriculture set out to do.

So far, the scientists had worked undisturbed in the isolation of their laboratories. When the agriculturalists started destroying infected trees, the problem emerged into the turbulent world of Gold Coast politics. Fighting swollen shoot by cutting down trees is like checking foot and mouth disease by killing infected cattle, and it strikes just as hard at farmers. In Britain, farmers can understand the nature of the disease, and the need for drastic treatment. In the Gold Coast, almost all cocoa farmers are illiterate peasants like Yaw Sabeng. It is useless talking to them of "virus disease" when they can't even sign their own names. Nor is it easy to make them see why newly infected trees, capable of bearing pods, must be cut.

The sullen opposition of farmers to any large-scale campaign of cutting out, and the distractions of the war period, combined to let swollen shoot rage almost unchecked. In 1939 it was infecting 1,000,000 cocoa trees a year. By 1945 this had risen to 5,000,000, and two years later it had reached the alarming rate of 15,000,000. In desperation, the authorities assumed compulsory powers to cut down infected and "contact" trees, and agricultural officers were ordered to ride roughshod over local opposition.

Phillip Hammond, a young agricultural officer from Norfolk, recalled an experience he had at this time in the little village of Onyimso, eleven miles along a narrow bush track from the nearest road. The village's cocoa trees were badly infected, and Hammond went there with a force of thirty African labourers to cut them down. As he sat on a tree stump, directing operations, the village chief approached with a cocked rifle. Hammond sat firm. The labourers, most of them ex-Servicemen, kept on cutting. The chief came nearer. The rifle was pointed at Hammond's head. "Keep cutting," Hammond told his men. The chief was closer, so close he was almost touching the white man, and then, in an instant, he had walked past. The rifle had not been fired. He walked on into the bush, and that was the last Hammond saw of him.

Crazy Story Swept The Coast

Obviously the campaign could not continue under such conditions. Local politicians, quick to seize on any issue which could be used to inflame popular opinion against the British, spread the story that the government was trying to force the Gold Coast to its knees by ruining the cocoa industry. The story was crazy, but it spread. Angry Gold Coasters rioted at Accra in January, 1948; two men were killed. A worried government ordered the compulsory cutting scheme to end at once. The mealybug was left to do its dirty work almost unchecked.

Britain then appealed to the United Nations for an impartial panel of three plant pathologists. A Dutchman, a Canadian and an American arrived at Accra in October, 1948, and expressed the unanimous opinion six weeks later that the cutting out of diseased trees should be resumed.

Hastily, the anti-virus forces swung into action again. The enemy was gaining rapidly, and trees were dying at the rate of one a second. The Cocoa Marketing Board voted £9,000,000 to compensate farmers for cut trees, and to help them to replant. But, with the riots still in mind, it was decreed that trees could be cut only where farmers were willing. Farmers whose trees were dead or dying agreed quickly enough, so that they could earn the bounty; but farmers whose trees were freshly infected were less co-operative. They wanted to harvest the one or two crops the trees would bear before they died.

So the agricultural officers found themselves forced to work well behind the front line of this war. It was like fighting a forest fire from the rear. They were beating out the smouldering embers while the flames raced ahead unchecked.

Saved At The Eleventh Hour

Only after months of patient argument were the African politicians persuaded to agree to compulsory cutting. In December, 1949, they gave the Agricultural Department full powers for an all-out campaign, by which time many people thought it was too late. Swollen shoot had devastated thousands of acres in the east, and outbreaks had been spotted in the west. Commercial leaders in the American and British chocolate industry started planning for the day when they might have to do without Gold Coast cocoa altogether, and expeditions were organized to search out new growing areas.

The Gold Coast agriculturalists decided to make a last desperate stand. A special department was set up on military lines to deal with the main areas of infection in the east, commando teams went to tackle the isolated outbreaks elsewhere, and a *cordon sanitaire* was created to isolate the worst areas. From headquarters at Koforidua, where the disease had first been spotted, Hammond directed operations in the eastern provinces. Schools were set up to train African field assistants.

Today Hammond is directing a force of 5,000 labourers, 800 African field assistants and junior agricultural officers, and fifty-six seniors, of whom about one in three are Africans. Special staff has been recruited in the Gold Coast and Britain.

Among the men who have signed four-year contracts to help in the fight is Monty Butt, a Gloucestershire farmer, who was finding things "a bit tame" at home. Butt has never liked the quiet life. Now he spends most of his days deep in the heart of the bush, supervising the cutting gangs. From a short distance away, the crash of falling trees sounds as though a herd of rogue elephants is breaking through. Then the African foreman can be heard: "Hurryup-hurryuphurryup." And it is, indeed, a race against time, for the men are there in thousands, but the mealybugs are there in thousands of millions.

The job of cutting down every infected tree—for one missed and left behind could undo all the good work—and of reinspecting cleared lands every month is an immense one. But at last the tide seems to have turned. Diseased trees are being cut at a faster rate than the mealybugs are infecting new ones. If all goes well, the major infected areas will be cleared by the end of 1953.

Even now, some of the more violent local politicians are trying to complicate the whole task. Only the other day, an A.O. learned of a political agent who was busy telling the farmers: "Don't let them cut your trees; all they want to do is spoil your crop so that you'll have to sell your land." After the labour gangs cut the trees and the government officer had paid the usual compensation, the agent reappeared and said: "See—now you have sold your land to the white men." Such stories are believed, even though Europeans have never been allowed to buy land in the Gold Coast on any terms.

Swollen shoot problems are being given priority at the elaborately equipped West African Cocoa Research Institute, fifteen miles from Koforidua. The acting director is a man whose surname and Yorkshire accent would be familiar to millions at home. He is Alan Pickles, a cousin of Wilfred, who has specialized in tropical agriculture for twenty years. He helped to fight the froghopper pest which was devastating the sugar plantations of the West Indies. Of the Gold Coast problem he says: "We'll have a go!" THE END

The man who gave the scientists their first clue: Yaw Sabeng studies some swollen shoots

The Peach Orchard

I wanted to hurt them both, the girl and her father. But only the man was vulnerable then. Rachael was beyond me

by ***LIONEL DAVIDSON***

She gave a little cry. I stopped dead in my tracks, unable to utter a sound. It was Rachael

SHE LIVED IN A big, old house at the other end of the village, a big, red old house, with the chimney column going up the outside. I can see it now: the house and the flat paved terrace outside it, and the peach orchard with its mouldering red brick walls, and the giant sycamore. I can see them at once, without any effort at visualization. And that's a funny thing, because I can't remember the girl.

That's the way memory works, and it's very odd. You'd think I'd remember something at least of what she looked like, after what happened, but I don't. There's just a faint suggestion—you couldn't call it an honest memory—of a girl in a white slip or a petticoat, that night, and, the next day, in a striped dress. I don't know how you'd explain that; maybe it's buried subconsciously, deliberately, because I was ashamed. But I don't know that I was ashamed, then. I don't know that I am now. Bewildered would be nearer to the right word; bewildered and angry.

My old man was the gardener there. I was about sixteen or seventeen, a strong, big lad. I worked for old Rumble, the cobbler. Before that I'd delivered meat and groceries. There was nothing much for me to do in the village. I meant to get out of it and earn my living in a town, and, at that time, I was saving up to do so.

The owner of the house was a man called Meyrick. He was one of the decaying gentry. In the village they used to laugh at him, and I think he knew it. He was, at any rate, very touchy, and very broke. He'd married late in life, and his wife, much younger than he, was a permanent invalid. The village used to wonder how this bloodless, uninspiring couple had made a daughter like Rachael.

RACHAEL was a little younger than I, a fresh, vivacious, tomboyish girl. About the time old Meyrick had to sell his farm, she was brought back from boarding school. She spent her time around the house and in the garden and the orchard.

My old man used to call her Miss Rachael. That was one of the things that stuck in my throat, the way everyone was respectful to the family, and called the girl Miss Rachael, and laughed at them behind their backs.

The peach orchard was one of the oldest in the country, and the fruit was exquisite. It used to fetch a great price. My father would pack the peaches and send them off direct to London. Meyrick got more out of it that way than by dealing through a wholesaler, and he certainly needed the money. But peaches in England are a very chancy crop. The blossom is out early and a spring frost, even a high wind, can strip the trees.

The best trees were against the wall. They were fan-trained, the arms, five or seven of them to each tree, fanned out flat against the wall. In winter, they were like a row of flexed, skeletal hands clutching the wall, but in the early spring, in their brief, delicious hour of blossom, the orchard was decked out as though for some fantastic carnival. Bush trees were spaced out all over the old springy turf, and though they had a finer show of blossom, like

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Mai Jones controls *Welsh Rarebit* from the top of a bar stool

Orchestra and the Girls in Harmony are all ready. They await the signal from Mai

Hit programme without a star

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

"Will the people in England understand it?" asks Mai Jones as she rehearses *Welsh Rarebit*. The answer is revealed by the listening figures: ten million people tune in on Thursday night

WITH THE AID of slide rules, secret formulae and a department known as Listener Research, the B.B.C. calculates that ten million people tune in to the weekly *Welsh Rarebit* show. The producer of this programme, Mai Jones, has a much simpler method of gauging its popularity. She asks her charwoman.

"I never know whether a show is a success until the morning after," says Mai, a tall, slender blonde, now in her forties. "At nine o'clock, the charwoman opens the door. First, she remarks on the weather; then, if she liked the broadcast, she'll say so. But if she says nothing about the show, I know we've not been up to standard and I have to ask for her opinion. She gives it—honestly."

Mai Jones's faith in the unassuming and, occasionally, unflattering comments of one ordinary listener is closely associated with the success of *Welsh Rarebit*. The programme has maintained the freshness of an amateur show through nine years of professional broadcasting. And the number of its listeners is still going up. Its ten million is the peak listening audience for B.B.C. variety productions. Even the B.B.C. official who releases this figure sounds as if he does not believe it. For Mai Jones's *Rarebit* just doesn't follow the established pattern for success.

The approved method of attracting ten million people to their wireless sets is to hire big stars, skilled writers and fancy orchestras. *Welsh Rarebit* has no star, no highly paid team of writers and no big orchestra. It does not even have a full-scale dress rehearsal. The show originates from a miners' hall in Cardiff that is about as well equipped for broadcasting as any barn in the principality. There's not even a clock in the place.

None of these handicaps bothers Mai. Back in 1941 she got orders to produce a show with a Welsh flavour. She found a bus driver who wrote sketches, a music store manager who led a choir and, of all people, a Russian woman to provide the essential Welsh harp accompaniment. Mai herself looked after the musical arrangements, wrote the theme song, conducted the orchestra, played odd bits of piano, booked the guest artists and organized the show.

Welsh Rarebit now goes on the air at 9 p.m. from Cory Hall, a horseshoe-shaped auditorium done up in institutional brown and buff with an occasional panel of light green trying desperately to make the place look more cheerful.

At a quarter to nine the plain wooden chairs and worn padded benches on the stage are empty. The Lyrian Singers, some twenty middle-aged men from shops and factories, wander in. The Girls in Harmony—six Newport housewives—take up their positions. The Welsh Variety Orchestra tunes up while waiting for the leader, Morgan Lloyd. He has been busy earlier in the day setting the scores on the music stands—a chore that would ruffle the dignity of any other orchestra leader.

Mai comes on stage in time to spend an uncomfortable five minutes before the show goes on the air. Out of consideration for the studio audience, the bedroom slippers or bootees in which she conducted rehearsals all day have been discarded for a pair of low-heeled shoes. She perches herself precariously on a chromium bar stool set on top of a table on the edge of the stage. "I'm going to fall off before I'm through," Mai murmurs. On the wooden chair in front of her are sheets of music, pencilled instructions and the essential stopwatch.

The stopwatch, a series of microphones and two tiny red lights are the only visible indications that this is a broadcast. There is no large electric clock to time the show. There is no engineer in view to let the producer know how the programme sounds on the air. The engineer for *Welsh Rarebit* is cooped up somewhere in a cubbyhole behind the stage. He communicates with Mai by the red lights.

As the light goes on, Mai punches her stopwatch and waves the orchestra into the overture. From then on she steals occasional glances at the watch on the chair to see that the show is running strictly to time.

"One night," Mae recalls, "I put on my glasses and looked at the stopwatch. It showed ten minutes were up. I thought we were getting through very quickly, so I signalled the cast to

The harpist is Marie Korchinska. In wartime she and her harp travelled in state—in a hearse

slow down. A little while later, I put on my glasses again and took another look at the watch. It still showed only ten minutes had passed and it dawned on me that the watch had stopped."

Mai was in the position of a cook who has lost count while measuring out the ingredients. She did not know what time it was, nor how much longer the show had to run. She did not know whether to call for a faster or slower performance. The only thing she could, and did, do, was to thread her way through the orchestra, off the stage and to the nearest telephone where she could call the B.B.C. Cardiff studios and get the exact time. When she got back to the stage with her stopwatch ticking again, she found that the show was just where it should have been on its timing.

Complaints And Compliments

Now Mai has a secretary who makes sure the stopwatch is wound up before every performance. The secretary also handles the *Welsh Rarebit* fan mail. Such complaints as arrive are usually from Welsh listeners who seem keenly aware that the show is heard in England, Scotland and other foreign parts. "*Welsh Rarebit!*" snorted one writer, "it should be *Welsh Bread and Marge*. How about more variety?" Probably the most touching compliment came from a sanatorium. "It makes us laugh too much," three patients wrote, "and we're not supposed to laugh because it starts us coughing."

Most of the laughs come from the scripts written by Eynon Evans, who started out as a bus driver in Caerphilly. For eight years Evans wrote and took a leading part in the Tommy Trouble adventures, a series revolving around a number of homely village situations. Tommy Trouble has been dropped from the current programme since the death of one of its leading characters. Evans is now writing a number of four-part serials for the show.

The first of these serials was built around a village choir, a circumstance which allowed Mai to make use of the Lyrian Singers in both the musical and dramatic portions of the broadcast. The serial dealt with the choir's problem of gracefully getting rid of its oldest member, a seventy-year-old tenor who did not realize that his failing voice was spoiling the singing. Evans plays the part of the old man and, when he sings, succeeds in making the melodious Lyrian Singers, who have been harmonizing for twenty-five years, sound like a collection of waifs and strays.

"What Evans has to do," says Mai, "is to sing just slightly out of tune. The quality stands out, although actually he is singing the second tenor tune almost correctly." Rehearsals of the sketch are sometimes interrupted by Mai with the reminder: "Are we going too fast? We must remember the people in England. Will they get it?"

Originally, the programme was planned for Welshmen in the Forces, and Mai would employ any talented men in uniform who happened to be available. One of the most promising Servicemen she auditioned was a bombardier in the Royal Artillery with an effective way of singing "Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie." His name was Donald Peers.

Obviously, finding singers is not the greatest problem that faces a producer in the Welsh Region. Mai's worries centre around the scarcity of comics with a line of Welsh patter or, failing that, with at least a Welsh name or birthplace.

"I'll do anything to find new talent—go down the mines or put on a show in the remotest village," Mai declares. "Last year I produced a show called *Talent Theatre* to try to find new ingredients for the *Rarebit*. I travelled around the country, holding auditions mornings and afternoons and broadcasting in the evenings. In one day I'd listen to as many as 150 acts."

Out of the several thousand auditions for *Talent Theatre*, Mai uncovered only six acts of what she considered lasting talent. One she did not book was probably the most unusual performance ever offered for radio. "The auditions went on in front of a microphone," Mai explains. "I usually sat in another room listening to them as they came over the air. This particular act got the signal to begin. I listened and didn't hear anything. I thought the mike was dead, so I went up to the stage to see what was happening. The act, I discovered, was an illuminated bicycle number. It was something to look at but there wasn't a sound you could broadcast."

Thanks largely to the encouragement they got from Mai, two Cardiff lads, Albert and Les Ward, are now making a living on the halls with a hillbilly musical act employing such un-Welsh instruments as balloons, horns and washboards. Another discovery Mai has pushed is Ossie Morris, who, at forty, has graduated to the ranks of the comedians after a life spent in Port Talbot as a steelworker.

Wales Imported A Harpist

The problem that almost stumped Mai was to find a harpist for the programme. Unable to discover one who was available in Wales during the war, Mai imported Marie Korchinska, a Russian-born musician from London. One of the finest harpists in the country, Mme Korchinska still makes a weekly pilgrimage to Cardiff for *Welsh Rarebit*.

"We almost lost her during the war when taxis became scarce," Mai recalls. "Mme Korchinska always carries her harp with her and it's no small piece of luggage. She would arrive in Cardiff in the blackout and would need help to get her instrument to the hall. Finally, she solved the transportation problem by making an arrangement with an undertaker. Each week Mme Korchinska would arrive in state with her precious harp riding in the back of a hearse."

Mme Korchinska is by now just as much a member of the *Welsh Rarebit* team as Dai Davies, who has been programme engineer for the show since it started. "I've heard every broadcast, but never seen one of them," says Dai, who in appearance is a smaller edition of the Radio Doctor. The fact that Dai, the engineer, and Mai, the producer, were married three years ago perhaps helps to explain the co-ordination which distinguishes *Welsh Rarebit*. Both Mai and Dai took degrees in music and each knows the effect the other is trying to achieve.

The daughter of the Newport stationmaster, Mai admits to being born and to remaining on what is technically English soil. She studied music at University College, Cardiff, and at the Royal Academy in London. A frustrated concert pianist, she started in radio at Savoy Hill in 1928 during the days "when the microphone was so big that they wheeled it over in a box to the piano."

A producer in the Welsh Region since 1941, Mai has written the music for forty radio revues, including the theme for *Welsh Rarebit*—"We'll Keep a Welcome in the Hillsides." This song became so popular that the B.B.C. was one day embarrassed by receiving a request for it on the Richard Dimbleby *Down Your Way* programme. The B.B.C. library had to admit it did not have a recording of it.

Sum-up Over Cup Of Tea

Mai starts her week on Friday mornings after the *Rarebit* show is over. She begins by making all the musical arrangements and then spends Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday discussing and rehearsing parts of the show. Within a few minutes after the radio broadcast has ended on Thursday night, she and Dai disappear together.

"We hire the biggest car we can get," Mai explains, "and we take the Girls in Harmony home. Then we go to our own home and sit down over a cup of tea to take the show apart. We start out feeling it was the worst ever, but by the time we're through our tea we're sure we couldn't have done better—though I never know for sure until the charwoman comes in the morning."

Saturday and Sunday Mai sets aside for doing her own cooking. "She's a good cook," says Dai. "But there's one dish we never have at home," declares Mai. "That's Welsh rarebit!" THE END

SECRET OF THE BLACK BRAE

by

MACDONALD HASTINGS

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL RAINER

The truth was out now. But between Anna and Robert was a question still to be settled

THREE PEOPLE HAD already been killed because of Gabriel Daggers. And now middle-aged, mild-mannered Montague Cork, general manager of the Anchor Accident Insurance Co., was face to face with the man, on the banks of the Highland river. Daggers had tried to swindle the company out of £25,000 on a false insurance claim.

It was no comfort to Cork to know that three people were out hunting for Daggers with guns. He was unarmed himself, and Daggers was mad.

Cork knew now whose body had been found in the River Edendale, and mistakenly identified as Daggers. It was Johnny Stephens, a wartime commando friend of Daggers who had helped him loot the fabulous Pongratz jewels during a raid in France. Daggers had murdered him. Now Stephens's French mistress, Madame Breuvart, was looking for Daggers and the jewels, and so was Kurt, the German from whom Daggers had taken the treasure.

Somewhere about, too, was Robert Shipley, Cork's assistant, and Anna Pryde, the famous young ballerina to whom Daggers had left the insurance money on condition that she did not marry for three years. Cork was not to know that Anna had just prevented Robert from shooting Daggers by jumping on his back and calling to Daggers to escape while he could. Anna's attitude to Daggers—one of pity and compassion—had baffled them all.

Cork was returning to the village to bring help. To get there, he had to cross the Black Brae. And at the Black Brae, Daggers, on the run now, was collecting the jewels from their secret hiding place in the river bank.

PART 7

Cork versus Daggers

FROZEN with fear, and also with a strange sort of excitement, Mr. Cork watched Daggers walking towards him. He could not quite catch up with his brain, which was spinning round. If only he could slow it down, think of some way to deal with this madman. . . .

Daggers came within ten yards of him and

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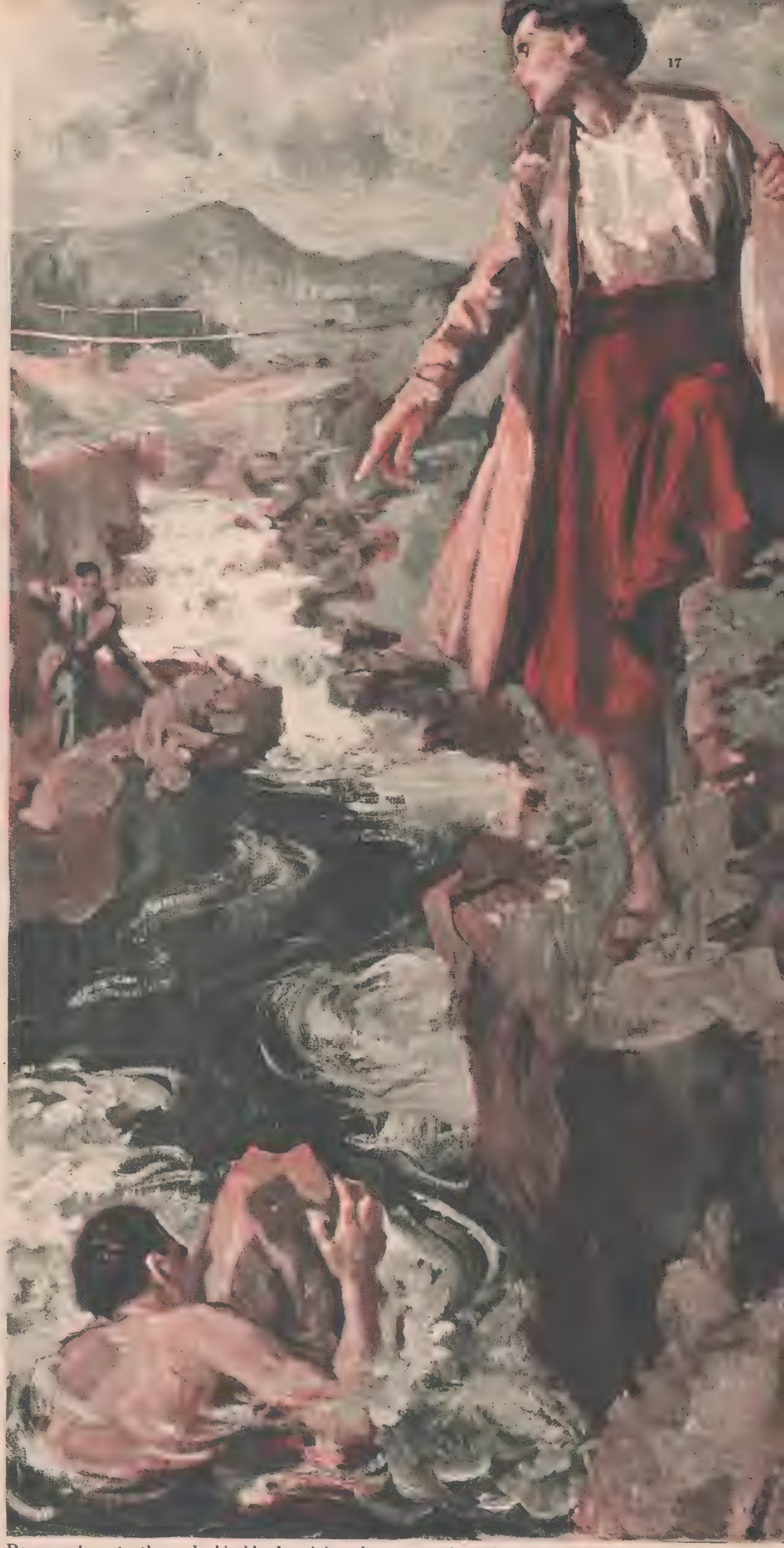


Daggers clung to the rock, his blood staining the water. Anna knew what she must do

Mann shows a pantomime score to two of the Principal Girls—Joy O'Neill (left) and Yvonne Marsh

Pepping up Panto

by WARREN HARRIS

To Mr. Mann, it means finding new songs, new dances and fresh slants on the old stories—with Right always winning in the end.

WILLIAM HASTINGS MANN, the plump, dark-haired chief production supervisor for Emile Littler, has spent the last five years devising snappier plot twists and better stage effects for eight provincial pantomimes. Since each one costs £50,000 to produce, runs at least fourteen weeks and attracts an average audience of 15,000 children, his job is an important one in show business. "All pantomimes," says expert Mann, "are really fairy tales with a moral. It's up to us to see that Right and Wrong are clearly defined and that Right always wins in the end."

Mann works out most of these essential definitions in close collaboration with Littler three nights of every week between March and November in his fourth-floor office above London's Palace Theatre. He plans his productions with Mrs. P. L. Wright, the blonde head of Littler's Birmingham pantomime factory; but it is often not until the actual production that his problems really crystallize.

Some years ago, for example, Mann hit upon the idea of brightening a Birmingham panto with a magnificent glass staircase. He planned to use it as a waterfall in some scenes and as a magic stairway in others. On the opening night, however, the plumber in charge forgot that the company would make a final entrance down the staircase and slipped out for a pint. The cast came on for the final chorus just as they had rehearsed the scene—except for one small difference: now they were ankle-deep in cold water.

Mann's chief task at the end of every panto season is known to the profession as "tatting up." This is the substitution of new scenes, new dance routines and new dialogue for worn and unsatisfactory bits. "The great thing," Mann says, "is to get a new slant on an old story. Now, everybody knows *Jack and Jill*, but we have to build a three-hour plot out of four lines of verse. For a start we decide that Jill doesn't know how to cook. We arrange a scene in which the funny men teach her how to bake an enormous pie. When the pie is finished, twenty-four chorus girls, dressed as blackbirds, burst out of the crust and sing a song of sixpence. See?"

Animals Are A "Must"

Tastes in pantomime vary slightly from town to town, but every audience demands a transformation scene, a water scene of some kind and a scene outside a castle. Animals are a *must* in every panto. Recently, Mann booked Nino and his Wonder Dog for this year's Sheffield pantomime and a talking elephant for Coventry. "The elephant," Mann explains, poker-faced, "could only speak German when it came over from the Continent. We've had a bit of a tussle teaching it English."

Most pantomime versions in current use were dreamed up by a Manchester insurance official named Hickory Wood. Now Littler, sometimes called the pantomime king, holds the copyright on many of Wood's ideas. Mother Goose always turns into a beauty half-way through the pantomime, but only in Wood's version does she gain her loveliness by diving into the magic pool. When another panto producer thoughtlessly used the same piece of business it cost him £8,000 in court.

Mann once had legal trouble himself—the only time he tangled with the Lord Chamberlain. This occurred at Sheffield, when a common informer complained about the then current version of *Little Bo-Peep*. Police visited the show but could find nothing wrong. However, the O'Gorman Brothers, the principal comedians, were using certain lines which had not appeared in the previous version. Since even a few lines different from last year means fresh licensing by the Lord Chamberlain, Mann had to go to court. His solicitor raised a smile when he said to the magistrate: "Little Bo-Peep has lost her script and doesn't know where to find it." The fine was a nominal £2.

The Birth Of Baron Hard-up

Early every December, the tempo of Mann's work accelerates. By now, rehearsals are under way and his non-stop schedule keeps him hopping for three solid weeks. He may attend dress rehearsals in towns as far apart as Plymouth and Belfast. When he joined Littler as musical director in 1935, they decided to concentrate on bright and streamlined pantos with non-stop music, comedy and dancing. While immortal characters like Sinbad and Prince Charming would continue to speak in the traditional rhyme, new characters of their own invention, like Baron Hard-up of Stoney-broke Castle, would use modern dialogue.

At that time, the eight best-known pantomimes, in order of popularity, were *Cinderella, Aladdin, The Babes in the Wood, Dick Whittington, Mother Goose, Jack and the Beanstalk, Humpty Dumpty* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Littler, though he later produced many of these with success, decided to build a series of entirely new plots around well-known nursery rhymes. "And some of our biggest hits," Mann says, "have been with pantos our fathers never knew." Among these he lists *Goody Two-shoes, Little Bo-Peep* and *Puss in Boots*.

Between them, Littler and Mann made other important changes. Children, they felt, were more often frightened than impressed by the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* or the robbers in *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. Once, however, when an emergency production of *Little Red Riding Hood* became necessary, they achieved a satisfactory compromise with a wolf whose mask stopped short below the nose. Soon after, Littler set out his new pantomime policy in a couplet which he sent to all his comedians:

Laughter, dancing, singing and fun,
Without a line to offend anyone.

Other managements were already working along the same lines and the formula was soon proved a success. Pantomime, from being the Ugly Sister of show business, rapidly boomed into an £8,000,000 industry, with more than a score of managements employing a total staff of 25,000 and staging more than 300 pantomimes every year. That is not to say that there are no headaches left in the business. Some time ago in the north a poster made the error of showing Goldilocks in Big Bear's bed instead of Little Bear's. So many indignant children visited the manager's office that £300 worth of publicity had to be withdrawn. "That sort of thing," Mann admits, "is our big nightmare—the fear that in some way we may let the children down." THE END

I am a blind housewife

by ALLENE REILLY

Because we are blind, David and I have never seen each other or the house we live in. Yet we've proved we can live and run a home like any other happily married couple

With Braille aids Mrs. Reilly can do most jobs; ironing and pouring hot liquids are hazards

I CAN REMEMBER how it first began as clearly as if it were yesterday. I was lying in a hospital bed, trying to read a book, and at first I thought that six months of struggling through pneumonia and its complications must have left me weaker than I had imagined. For there it was again—there was no mistaking it. Every time I lowered my eyes to the printed page, I could see a small black dot hovering before my left eye, tracking slowly along between the lines of type. It was as if an asterisk had become detached from the pages of the book and taken on a life of its own.

Only a few months before, I had celebrated my twenty-first birthday. I looked forward eagerly to a free and happy life, one which would give me the chance to do all the things that I had always wanted to do. Like most other girls, I wanted marriage and children, but there was also a career included in my scheme of things. If anyone had told me that in ten years' time, although totally blind, I would still achieve most of them, I would only have shaken my head in utter despair. Blindness to me was as final as death—something that spelt the end of everything.

I know now that I was wrong, but because of that I want to tell the story of my fight against the handicaps of blindness and of my final victory.

Quite soon now, David, my husband, will be back from a shopping expedition and standing in the room beside me. Because we are both of us blind, people sometimes find it hard to believe that we live together like other happily married couples, but the fact that David and I have never seen one another has not made any ultimate difference to our knowledge of one another. I know, for instance, that David will identify our gate from all the other gates in our Birmingham street by first locating the only iron gate, which stands a yard or two beyond. With me, it is the sudden change in the texture of the wall that marks the spot. And though we have never seen it, we know this to be our home and we are happy in it.

Like A White-hot Needle

I wish I could have foreseen something of all this ten years ago, when that small, black, relentless spot wavered before me every time I tried to read. It would have helped me to combat some of the anguish when everything seemed to be going against me.

At first, when the doctors told me that I was suffering from no more than an inflammation of the retina in the left eye, I felt comforted, but very soon the inflammation turned to glaucoma, and the eye had become white and glazed because of the disease within. The pain was excruciating, like a white-hot needle boring into the pupil. Sometimes I lay awake in agony all night, unable to sleep. The doctors tried diathermy treatment, though with only qualified success; they took blood tests and kept me under constant observation. Then the left eye suffered a haemorrhage, which prevented them from operating, and very soon afterwards that ominous black spot was moving purposefully in the path of my right eye as well. Deep down inside me I knew that my last hope had gone.

But soon I had convinced myself that this couldn't really be going to happen to *me*. Every morning, in the hospital, I used to wake up wondering: Will I be able to see more or less today? But it was never really easy to tell: my sight wavered too much from day to day. Yet, whatever the signs, I refused to admit that there was any ultimate danger. I fought against the idea of blindness with everything I knew.

Even after I had returned home, with the sight almost gone from my right eye, I made both myself and my parents miserable by my efforts to carry on as if everything was normal. I was so sensitive about what little sight I had

Continued on page 35

Pioneers in white are taming the atom

by HARRY HOPKINS

BRITAIN'S ATOMIC STORY (3): Behind thick lead walls, science's newest acolytes work by remote control amid invisible menace. Yet atomic power is no Wellsian dream: it is on our doorstep

A bell rings if this "probe" detects any trace of radio-activity on the hands. Clothes sometimes have to be changed three times a day

A LITTLE TIME AGO, the "Situations Vacant" columns of the more learned organs of the Press offered a somewhat out-of-the-usual job. Applicants, who had to be well-qualified electrical or mechanical engineers, accustomed to experimental work, were required to take charge of a small group, engaged at Harwell on problems of heat transfer and "other special difficulties" arising in the development of nuclear energy for power purposes. "The programme," added the advertisement, "offers considerable opportunity for original work."

The last sentence might well qualify as a masterpiece of scientific understatement. For the physicists, chemists, metallurgists and engineers brought together at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell to put the power of the atom in peacetime harness face a maze of problems as unprecedented in content and as unpredictable in their course as the changes that their solution would bring to the economic geography of the world.

For atomic power could be a great leveller, switching the world's centres of gravity, finally emancipating humanity from the two-century-old grip of the coalfields. For old nations like Britain, weighed down by declining coalfields, it could mean rejuvenation; for have-nots like Italy it could bring new possibilities.

Vision Of The Near Future

One pound of uranium, the size of a large walnut, can release energy equal to two million pounds of coal. That is an important fact—one of the facts that may shape the future of the world. But it is still very far from being a realized fact. Bepo, the larger of Harwell's two atomic piles and still the biggest we possess, contains many tons of uranium. Yet Bepo generates only 6,000 kilowatts of energy, sufficient to heat the buildings but far short of the capacity of the smallest power station.

Nevertheless, today atomic power is no Wellsian dream. Atomic power is on our doorstep. Not long ago, Sir John Cockcroft, Harwell's chief, announced that pilot power producers could be running in five years' time. A few more years after that and the first electric current could be flowing into the national grid from the first full-scale power pile.

In essence the process of releasing the energy of the atom is as simple, as straightforward, as near to Nature, as the process that draws power from rushing streams. But whereas the one remains simple from first to last, the other gives rise in practice to the most formidable complications. Neutrons, hurtling out from uranium nuclei in an ever-widening arc of "fire," produce not only energy, but also a whole range of new

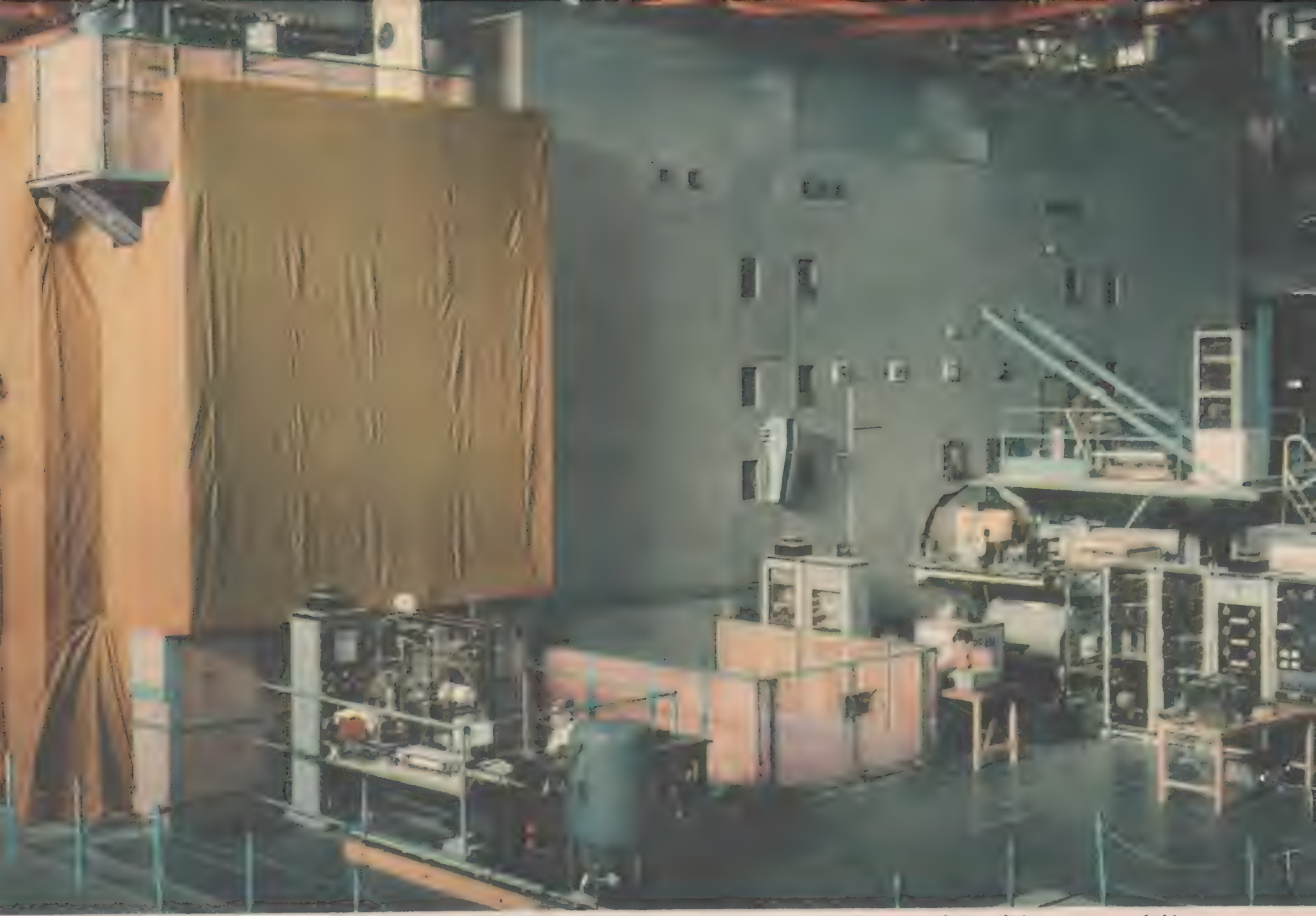
The silent mass of Bepo. Britain's

elements. These — in Harwellese — "fission-products," which may number as many as thirty-five and range from zinc to gadolinium, slowly "poison" the pile's energy-releasing reaction. The "ashes" smother the "fire." So, at intervals, the pile's operators must withdraw its uranium rods, purify them of "fission-products"—each of which may need a different treatment—reforge and replace them.

The parts of the nuclear reactor are fiercely radio-active, deadly. To handle them at all has meant developing novel and ingenious techniques and devices. Up and down the face of Bepo moves a mechanical ram, raised by a hoisting system, pushing each uranium rod in turn through to the other side of the pile where a stout lead "coffin" moves into position to receive it. Thence it travels to the "hot laboratory"—hot with the hotness of flesh-withering rays.

Harwell is proud of its hot laboratory. Only recently completed, and designed from start to finish for its peculiar purpose, it is the best-equipped radio-chemical laboratory in Europe, possibly anywhere. Air-lock chambers insulate this strange new world of invisible menace from the prosaic old world outside. It is a world without corners, a world of highly polished surfaces, where doors are knobless and open of themselves and the air is changed every second and a half.

Here work the white-robed radio-chemists—the very newest of science's acolytes. They work strangely, juggling their phials from behind thick lead walls, by remote control rods, all done by mirrors. And as they work they glance from time to time as if by habit at the rows of clock faces on the wall at the end. Those clocks



biggest atomic pile, generates only 6,000 kilowatts of energy. But the curtains hide secret developments which may one day result in atom-powered ships

are everywhere at Harwell. They tell, not the time, but the degree of radio-activity present. One clock steadily tots up the day's total. Another rings a bell when the danger level is passed. By its Geiger counters, this atomic world lives and breathes and has its being.

For the rest it is reminiscent of an operating theatre—an operating theatre in which infection threatens not from bacteria but from even more minute flying particles, dead things that live and kill. Like surgeons, the radio-chemists button on their gowns at the shoulder. Like surgeons, when they draw their gloves off they pull them inside out so that the naked hand never touches the "infected" outside. The drill is extensive, rigorous. Nothing may be put in the mouth lest —greatest peril of all—radio-active particles should get inside the body. No cigarettes may be smoked; no cosmetics used.

Growl From The Robot Probe

At entrances and exits, there are "clean" and "dirty" sides, meticulously insulated. There is a routine of clothes changing to be gone through, sometimes three times a day. And for the discarded lab. clothes there is a unique laundry where articles are sorted for "hotness," treated, if need be, with chemical detergents and dilute acids, checked and checked again. There are shower-baths and shower-baths, and after the shower-baths the Geiger counters again. One Geiger "probe" runs over the body. Another, a white robot, stands erect, with two oval holes for the hands. Try to take your hands out before the check is complete and the robot will growl menacingly. Leave the minutest trace of radio-activity on them and it rings a loud bell.

So indispensable is this elaborate structure of precautions to the growth of atomic energy that it is accorded the wholetime attention of one of Harwell's six constituent divisions, the division of health physics under Dr. W. G. Marley. Marley has a health radiation survey officer and assistants in every "hot" laboratory and room in the establishment, checking, rechecking. "Ceaseless vigilance" is his watchword—and clearly nothing else would do. One day, perhaps, a certain spot on the floor is suddenly discovered to be highly radio-active. There is nothing to be seen. No apparent explanation. The radiation survey officer and his men comb the place for clues. For a long time they draw a blank. Then, perhaps, someone remembers that someone else had put down a bottle on that spot the day before. The bottle had stood on a radio-active tray. The mystery is solved.

By now a great deal of the health physics work is well-established routine. Regular medical examinations, blood counts, checking on the packets of film every exposed worker carried in his pocket.

"It's interesting," Dr. Marley told me, "that Becquerel, the discoverer of the power of uranium, himself carried a piece around in his waistcoat pocket—until one day he found his flesh underneath was badly burned. But today, because of the high price paid by the early radiation workers, we know fairly precisely just what the effects of each sort of radiation will be. And at Harwell we have set our limits at the level laid down by the Medical Research Council as safe. This is thought to be probably ten times below the smallest amount likely to cause any harm."

Whenever a new atomic station is announced the Ministry of Supply at once issues an assurance that no harmful effects will be experienced by the neighbourhood. And this is no mere soothing phrase, for, although the air leaving the "hot" labs. is filtered, electrostatically precipitated before it passes out, nevertheless checks are not confined to the inside. Vans loaded with detector apparatus cruise continually around the grounds and surrounding roads. At intervals a barrage balloon is to be seen floating above Harwell, checking on the upper air. And all this is not so simple as it sounds, because in normal conditions there is always a "background count" —radio-activity deriving from radon gas from radio-active materials always present to some extent in the earth—and the strength of this fluctuates with winds, rainfall and seasons.

"Hold Your Breath, Get Out!"

Doors at Harwell carry small red, blue or white triangles. From "red areas" and "blue areas"—"very hot" and "hot"—Mrs. Mopp is strictly barred, for here even cleaning-up calls for an almost surgical touch. It is the job of a highly trained corps of picked men—many of them youngsters demobbed from the Forces. Their golden rule is "Don't Spread."

Harwell's radio-chemists work under a rather forbidding notice. It reads: "In Case of a Spill—(1) Hold Your Breath, (2) Get Out of the Room and Lock It." Such accidents are rare—an official could recall only six in two years—but if they do happen, the drill is ready. Clad in rubber suits, boots and face-masks, the decontamination squads go in. In bad cases they fall back on respirators, with their air supply pumped by pipe line from the outside. But they get no danger money. Said R. H. Burns, their chief: "The way we have things organized at Harwell

Squads of highly trained men clean Harwell's "hot" areas. Their golden rule is: "Don't spread"

now, we reckon they're a lot safer than they would be working in a lead factory."

Just what clean-up treatment is finally chosen will depend on the substance involved. It could be any of 450 different radio-active substances —and each might need a different method. Behind all would be the immutable fact that once the pile has created it, there is no known way of destroying radio-activity, or even of hastening its natural rate of decay—anything from a few days to several thousand years. Already, even at Harwell, radio-active waste is an embarrassment. Cleaning-rags, old filter papers, used glassware, cannot just be thrown away. They are packed in drums and stowed in concrete-lined vaults. Last year, several ship-loads of drums were dumped in two thousand fathoms of sea, well away from fishing grounds and currents.

Nightmare Problem Ahead

In prewar days, the total amount of radio-active material in use in the entire world did not exceed 2,000 curies; a single atomic power-plant the size of the Battersea power station would produce 100,000 curies of radio-active "death-dust" a *day*. And in much of this ash from the atomic furnaces the radio-active particles would be widely diffused, demanding a formidable apparatus of concentration. Plants are being designed to process some of this concentrate, turning it into powerful gamma-ray sources for industrial radiography. But what to do with the rest? Put it down a disused mine? It might seep into water supplies. Dump it in the sea? There are tides. Imagine half the world running on atom power and the problem begins to assume nightmare proportions. Can man interfere with the innermost forces of matter on this deliberate and colossal scale—and still avoid the penalties? To that pregnant question the men at Harwell still do not know the answer.

Sensational the power of the atom may be, but this is a practical world, and in the practical world the question is: What does it *cost*—per kilowatt? U.S. experts at the Oak Ridge, Tennessee, plant have put the figure at roughly the same as the cost of coal-generated electric power in countries where coal is plentiful and easy to get; in countries like Russia and perhaps even Britain atom power will, they believe, compete strongly with present methods.

On this subject opinion among atomic scientists ranges all the way from long-long-time pessimism to guarded optimism. Among the moderate optimists, however, are some of the world's leading nuclear physicists, like Britain's Professor M. L. E. Oliphant, who told members of the Royal Society of Arts recently: "I feel confident that atomic energy has a very important part to play in the production of industrial power and that the cost will probably ultimately be found to be much less than the cost of power from other sources."

The question now is no longer so much "how," as "when." . . . Whenever it is, the prize will be great. Said Dr. Hafstad, chief of U.S. Reactor Development: "An atomic pile is certainly not a magic perpetual motion machine, but it is an incredibly compact storage battery." Echoed his British opposite number, Sir John Cockcroft: "With a successful application of the breeder principle, 170 tons of uranium could supply all the power being used in the world today."

Already the first "breeder-pile" is under construction in the U.S. And, now in 1950, Britain, who sacrificed her lead in the first year of the war to throw everything into the American project, is catching up fast. By night the lonely Cumberland coast blazes with hundreds of lights as, beside two giant grey stacks, an army of white-coated experts from Workington and Maryport and Whitehaven swarm about a long low building of glass—a vast new "hot laboratory" where atomic fuel from the two new piles will be processed. A few miles to the southward, in the select little resort of Seascale, painters put final touches to the blue-and-lemon-coloured front doors of the atom men's estate.

There is much coming and going these days, too, at the project's production headquarters at Risley, near Warrington, a town which, with the American Air Force's B36s on one side, and the atomic energy drawing boards on the other, today spans the whole fantastic spectrum of the atom. For even when Harwell's scientists have done their best, formidable problems remain for the engineers, the men who must fill in the whens and wheres and just hows. In his atomic pile, the nuclear physicist can generate as much heat as the engineer can take off to heat his steam-boilers or run his gas-turbines. But metals corrode, air cannot take it. The answer might be helium gas. Or it might be some liquid metal. Whatever it is, there are worse posers here for the metallurgists than ever Whittle set them with his jet. For now their products must withstand not only unheard-of temperatures, but also the assault of the atom.

Yet, day by day, behind the wire, behind the swirling security fog, progress is made, the work pushed on. Four miles beyond Chester's Roman wall, a single fingerpost points off the broad arterial road that runs to Birkenhead—*Capenhurst—1 Mile*. It was a pleasant lane, quiet and leafy, and all I met in the first ten minutes was a collie dog and a couple of Post Office linesmen. Then the olive green Office of Works trucks began to come by, piled high with freshly dug clay. From across the thick hedges came the growl of concrete mixers, the hiss and stutter of compressed air. At the far end of a lush green meadow men were digging patterns in the turf. Were they perhaps the patterns of Britain's first atomic power station? Capenhurst did not know.

Submarine Engine Experiments

Nearly two hundred miles away, in another quiet village—a village mentioned in Domesday Book—other gangs of labourers were at that moment cutting into other fields. The work at Aldermaston, Berkshire, the sixth of Britain's atomic stations, announced the Ministry of Supply, would be spread over several years and would employ a considerable labour force. Would it be here, then, that the atomic age would be born, nine miles from Reading and forty-five miles from London?

After the pilot atom power station, comes the atomic engine for ships and submarines. Experiments on the submarine engine, announced Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser, are already going forward. Enabling ships to girdle and re-girdle the globe without re-fuelling, such an engine would revolutionize both shipping economics and naval strategy, powerfully reinforcing the already strong position of the submarine.

A ship is as big as a large building. It can easily deal with the weight and bulk of the fifty tons or so of concrete shielding which even the smallest atomic engine would have to have. But with an aeroplane, where every pound counts, the story would be different. It seems likely that not only would an atomic-powered plane have to be very large, its engine would have to be constructed with concentrated atomic fuel, which would make it prohibitively costly. Nevertheless, because such an atomic-powered bomber could swing the balance of armaments, the U.S. Government awards it high priority.

Australian-born Professor Oliphant gives this caution: "Any attempt to forecast now the ways in which atomic energy will be applied for the good of mankind is as unreal as to prophesy the future of a five-year-old child." At any moment, in some secluded physics laboratory the key may be turned which will send nuclear physics off again on one of those comet-like trajectories of discovery such as began in Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory in 1932 when Cockcroft and Walton split the atom.

What Will Britain Discover?

By comparison with America, where the Atomic Energy Commission has 1,300 plants, spends £150,000,000 a year, and, we are told, owns more land than the state of Rhode Island and runs more buses than the City of Philadelphia, the British effort may seem puny. But it has never been possible to measure scientific work by its scale. And it could be that Britain in mid-century, relatively untroubled by the bomb, might yet make to this revolutionary new source of power a contribution as noteworthy as those she made to the steam engine, the turbine, internal combustion and the jet.

But, as international as airline pilots, no true physicist thinks like that. For none knows better than he that science is one, that man cannot take the curse off the atom nor enjoy the fruits of his knowledge till the keys of that knowledge can pass once again from nation to nation as they did at the start of this strange and wonderful story of the atom. THE END

"Cats may baffle and annoy you, but they'll never bore you." Mrs. Williams, breeder of Siamese, says they are the most intelligent and resourceful

Cats with a family tree

by RICHARD COLLIER

Siamese are royalty in a growing world of tabby, tom and tortoiseshell. Even so, they may prefer a mongrel as a mate

Stud cats can't go as they please. Mrs. Williams gives them exercise on a lead

CAT LOVERS STILL RECALL the time when one of their number sued her neighbour for "alienating the affections" of her pet cat. Citing twenty-five instances of "direct enticement" with fish and saucers of milk, she claimed substantial damages at the County Court. The judge, however, after some deliberation, dismissed the case with costs to the defendant. "A cat," he ruled, "is a strange and variable animal, whose reasons for doing anything are quite beyond the comprehension of mere human beings."

Mrs. Kathleen Williams, a quick-smiling, softly spoken housewife of Sutton, Surrey, who is also one of the country's foremost cat breeders, agrees with the judge's verdict, though to her a cat's unpredictable nature is part of its fascination. "A cat," she says, "may sometimes baffle you and sometimes annoy you, but the one thing it will never do is bore you."

A good many other people share the opinion, for the wave of cat enthusiasm at present sweeping Britain far surpasses anything known before the war. Red cats, blue cats, black-and-white cats and even tabby cats have clubs exclusively devoted to their interests, and close on 100 cats of all shapes and sizes are exported as dollar-earners every year. Of Britain's nine million-odd cats, more than 53,000 can now boast a pedigree that goes back for three or more generations.

As Mrs. Williams sees it, almost anyone possessed of three basic qualities—"patience, understanding and a genuine love of cats"—can in time become a successful breeder. She herself began twenty-five years ago. Travelling up from Cardiff by train, she killed time by reading an article on the problems of cat breeding by the late Phyl Wade, a well-known breeder. This so intrigued her that she wrote to the author and sought advice. Soon afterwards, she bought Suti, her first brood queen, for £5, and settled down to cat breeding in earnest.

The problem of what cats to keep depends on individual taste. Mrs. Williams chose Siamese because, of all the twenty-six breeds, they struck her as "the most intelligent and the most resourceful." One Siamese queen that she knew not only house-trained one of its own kittens by placing it regularly on the sanitary tray, but, on one occasion, even helped a sister queen with the delivery of her litter. Other breeders prefer Blue Persians, which are so affectionate that they can be trained to meet their owner at the bus stop, or Manx cats, which are highly intelligent.

Not Allowed In The House

Most breeders house their charges in outdoor "catteries," not unlike large-scale chicken runs, with separate quarters for studs and brood queens. To accommodate her own six cats, including such famous queens as Doneraile Debutante (the best Siamese of 1948) and studs like Doneraile Brun Boy, winner of many "firsts," Mrs. Williams had to construct three separate catteries, each 12 ft. by 18 ft. by 7 ft., at a total cost of £15. Studs are never allowed in the house, and even take their exercise attached to a special exercising line, but queens normally come and go as they please. "I don't carry all this to the lengths that some breeders do," says Mrs. Williams. "One woman I know even has a special swinging flap cut in her front door, so that her Abyssinian queens don't have the bother of waiting outside."

Breeding for export or the show bench is largely a matter of skill and patience. Queens usually begin "calling" for the first time at ten months and the procedure then, says Mrs. Williams, is to single out the queen's weak

'Artificial teeth are so different... they need a special cleanser!'

THE Chemist is right. The *best* way to make false teeth hygienically clean is by using Steradent, an oxygenated cleanser which is specially made for dentures. The Steradent in solution can penetrate to every crevice between the teeth and in the contours of the plate, removing unsightly film and stains, disinfecting and deodorising without any harm to the denture itself. To clean the *best* way is also the simple and convenient way. Just steep the teeth in Steradent solution for 20 minutes each day—then rinse under the tap—that's all. Your dentures will be kept sparkling clean, odour free and hygienic.

Special mouth conditions (heavy depositing, heavy smoker's stains, etc.) require extra attention—so give an extra steeping *overnight* at regular intervals. Brush under tap before and after this.

Steradent

REGD.

Cleans and sterilises artificial teeth

points—poor eye-colour or a badly shaped head—and select a stud that is particularly strong in them. Sometimes this involves sending the queen to another breeder (for a stud fee of five guineas), though first the stud's ancestry has to be traced back three generations to make sure that *his* strong points are not a fluke. In the meantime the breeder has to contend with the mating call of the queen at close quarters, which is not unlike that of a baby crying.

Queens often have their own ideas when it comes to a choice of husband. One of Mrs. Williams's cats resisted all efforts to put her to stud with well-connected sires for close on fourteen months. Finally she met the husband of her choice, an old battle-scarred tom with torn ears, in the back garden. Only after she had borne him a litter of six coal-black kittens did she resign herself to mating with the aristocracy.

Disease is rarely a problem. Contrary to general belief, cats can stand up to almost anything except draughts, and often live healthily for eighteen years. Grooming them with soap and water is inadvisable; instead Mrs. Williams favours dry-cleaning them with bran. In cases of extreme illness, it is often sympathy that turns the scales. Mrs. Williams once pulled through a sick cat by organizing her family into a non-stop nursing service—"there was always someone to hold its paw, day and night, and after thirty-six hours it started to improve."

Taste For Rhubarb

Feeding presents few headaches. A cat for showing or breeding, weighing about six pounds, with a temperature stable at 101.4, should be fed at least twice a day: six ounces of raw horse-meat and vegetables at each meal, varied occasionally with rabbit, pilchards in tomato sauce, and liver. Too much fish is not advisable—"the coat gets a strange dusty look"—and milk, which often brings on mild diarrhoea, takes second place to water. Cats have also been known to fancy raw eggs, fruit cake, cheese, beetroot, oranges — even rhubarb. Over-feeding must be avoided; a cat's stomach holds only half a pint, and a queen with indigestion can, oddly enough, pass it on to her kittens.

Other problems are less easily solved. Blue Persians turn a deep rusty brown when exposed to sunshine and often take a year to regain their former colour. In some short-haired varieties, like the Cream or the Tortoiseshell, the breeder often finds a persistent tabby strain cropping up in generation after generation.

In many years, the overheads of breeding, which Mrs. Williams reckons at an average of £3 a week, are not much more than balanced by the sales; the prices of Siamese, for example, vary between £8 and £25, with £40 as a good export price, but the demand is largely seasonal.

Today, almost any pedigree cat is worth double what it was before the war. Currently, Siamese are the most popular breed, with an average of thirty or more exported every year, but Blue Persians (at £6 and upwards a kitten), snowy-white Chinchillas (at roughly the same price) and Abyssinians follow closely behind. Some breeds, like the Long Haired Red Self, coloured like a setter dog, and the Cream Short Hair, have now almost died out, but the numbers of enthusiasts continue to grow, with close on twenty prominent cat clubs staging fifteen or more shows every year.

Ascot Of The Cat World

The show season for cats kicks off in late July with the Kensington Kitten and Neuter Club Show—"the Ascot of the cat world"—and ends in late January, with the start of the breeding period. The highlight is the National Cat Club Show (to be held this year on December 5), attended by 5,000-odd cat lovers, with ten judges presiding over 250 entries in 140 separate classes.

The ruling body of the cat world, composed of thirty delegates from the twenty leading clubs, goes under the august name of the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy. Every cat breeder who wishes to establish a pedigree for his cat must first register it with the council for a fee of two shillings, giving details of its name, parentage, ownership and date of birth. Ensuring a cat's pedigree can be of vital importance to its offspring. A cat exported to America, for example, must first prove an ancestry of three generations, and the council's secretary, affable, heavily built W. A. Hazeldine, labours long hours drawing up "family trees" for keen exporters.

Hazeldine's other tasks include the issuing of export licences, the registration of all new pedigree cats (an annual average of 4,000), and the compilation of an annual stud list. So many Siamese cats are currently being registered, however, that the council has appointed an assistant secretary to deal with these alone.

More Mongrels

Despite the increase in pedigree cats, the largest number of entries in any non-championship show still falls under the heading of "Domestic." Experts estimate that the number of mongrels has gone up by more than sixty per cent in the past five years, and the enthusiasm here is fully as great as it is among the pedigree-owners.

When a local council recently launched a "clean food" campaign with a poster, *Food must be protected from Dust, Dirt and Cats*, eighty per cent of the town's shopkeepers refused to exhibit it. Claiming that their cats were far better at keeping down vermin than the local authorities, they challenged the sanitary inspector to a competition. After a fortnight's intensive effort, the cats won by five rats and the poster was withdrawn. THE END

How Glasgow fought the smallpox plague

WHAT really happens when a deadly epidemic strikes a great city? In a two-part article—for the record—JOHN BULL turns to the dramatic story of Glasgow's battle against the smallpox outbreak in which six people died early this year. In his striking articles, covering four tense weeks, Don Everitt reconstructs in detail how medical resources were mobilized to keep this dreaded plague from getting out of control. Do not miss the first article, which appears

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

YANGTSE INCIDENT

Continued from page 9

barely seventeen and looked less in spite of his height. His eyes darted around, taking everything in. . . .

Back on the ship, Wilkinson, French and others of the crew heard Berger yelling, "Swimmers over the side!" Wilkinson immediately shinned down a rope hanging over the port side, opposite the wireless office. He was dazed and weak and not entirely aware of what he was doing. It wasn't until some time later that he saw his hands had been burned raw by the rope. He slipped into the water. He couldn't use his wounded leg and there was a two and a half knot flood current. He barely made the shore and had to be helped up the bank.

Telegraphist Jack French also jumped over the side. He noticed with a feeling of acute helplessness and fear that bullet splashes churned the water all around him. Because of the strong current he swam diagonally up river and drifted in to the bank with the moving mass of water. He hadn't been on the bank for long when he heard Monaghan shouting: "I want volunteers to take the whaler back to the ship for more wounded." He looked around and saw that he was alone on the bank. He thought: *I'm the only one around to volunteer. If I don't, Monaghan will draw a blank.*

"Hold it!" he shouted, and scrambled towards the whaler.

Lieutenant Strain was at the ship's rail as the whaler approached *Amethyst*. He cupped his hands to his mouth. "Is there a telegraphist aboard?" he demanded. "Yes, sir," French said. He was pulled up the ship's side by a rope and he and Strain entered the wireless office. There they rigged up emergency batteries and a generator. They knew now that *Consort* would have to come down the river soon, and they tried to contact her but were unable to do so. As French put it, "We had no joy."

N.A.A.F.I. "Free Issue"

At about noon, Cook Griffiths made some tea and sandwiches, but there was no full noon meal. There was too much confusion to organize it. John McNamara, the civilian N.A.A.F.I. canteen manager, filled a bucket with chocolate bars, packages of sweets and cigarettes and passed it around to the wounded. He didn't bother about being paid.

Wilkinson, resting at full length along the sunken footpath on shore, heard somebody say, "Watch the tripwires and the mines." He remained where he was. Late that afternoon, he returned to *Amethyst* by the whaler-ferry Monaghan had organized. He went below and was surprised to find that, although some sixty ratings had left the ship, quite a number of his engineroom staff had remained on board. Several had been below shutting off steam earlier and had not heard the evacuation order.

Heath, too, had jumped over the side and had swum the fifty yards to shore. Reaching the bank, he waited for other swimmers to join him. Then he led them along the bank, skirting the mine-field. One of *Amethyst's* Chinese cooks had come ashore, dressed in his blues, including collar and tie. Heath and the others were crawling along on their stomachs, but the Chinese cook, a short and roly-poly man, walked beside them apparently without fear.

"Get down!" Heath yelled. "You'll get hit!" The Chinese shook his head with a certain dignity. "No get down," he retorted. "Wearing good suit."

All this time the crackle of small-arms came from the far bank. When Heath thought they were out of range, he stood up in the grass. As soon as he did, two bursts of carbine fire whistled by. He hit the grass again. The bursts had come, unexpectedly, from the Nationalist side of the river. "Maybe they don't know who we are," somebody said. It was at this point that Bannister joined Heath's party.

A Chinese messboy, also attached to *Amethyst*, said to Heath, "I swim over." He was a small, cheerful youngster, named Chan Ping. "I don't think you ought to try it, Chan," said Heath. "It's a fast current." Chan insisted. "If I get over and wave, you come. If they fire at me, you stay."

Three Cheers For Chan

Chan swam across the arm of the Yangtse and soon the Nationalists sent three sampans over for Heath and his men. They were met on the south shore by a Chinese major who spoke no English. He bowed a welcome. Heath explained through the Chinese cook that he wanted medical assistance for the wounded. The major grinned and led them to a small hut used as an outpost. When Chan appeared later, soaked but smiling, somebody yelled: "Three cheers for Chan!" Chan was delighted. He has since joined the British Navy as a cook.

A moment later Heath heard renewed artillery fire. His first thought was that the Communists were finishing off the *Amethyst*. A Nationalist private rushed in, out of breath, and spoke to the major. The major grinned at Heath. "British ship coming down river," he said through the interpreter. Heath dashed back to the river bank. *Now for the rescue*, he thought.

It was, indeed, *Consort*. Firing bravely at the Communist battery, she sailed past *Amethyst* without reducing speed. Then she slowed down and, about half a mile down river, came to a stop. She turned and fired her guns at the north bank. After a while she headed up river again towards *Amethyst*. Her guns didn't stop shooting for a single moment. *Amethyst*, meanwhile, had raised steam for the getaway. Her ship's company waited tensely.

Weston had ordered Signalman Dennis Roberts, who had lost an eye, to signal *Consort* by light. "What's the matter with that eye, Roberts?" Weston asked. "It's hurt, sir," Roberts said. He didn't know his eye was gone.

Consort had by then been hit by the Communists on her bridge, wireless office and wheelhouse. Her captain, Commander I. G. Robertson, had been wounded. "Is it possible to tow you off?" the light blinked from *Consort*.

Weston thought: *We'll both be blown to bits by the Communist battery*. His was a difficult decision to make. He made it. "Only if the batteries are silenced first," the *Amethyst* lamp blinked.

A Last Salvo

Consort fired a last salvo at the battery and turned back down the river. She steamed away, full ahead, leaving fires blazing on the north shore. After a while the saddened men on *Amethyst* heard *Consort's* guns again, far down the river. The sound of firing died away, and a menacing silence settled over the Yangtse.

It seemed very strange, incredibly strange. Now that *Consort* had gone on down, no other help could be expected. *Amethyst* and her men were alone. The ship was still hard aground. The Communist battery had her pinned down by the threat of a point-blank hammering at any time its gunners chose.

"We were sitting there," McNamara said later, "wondering what was going to happen next—and how bad it was going to be."

NEXT WEEK: Amethyst gets off the mud. Kerans receives his orders

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GOOD MORNINGS BEGIN WITH GILLETTE

THE PEACH ORCHARD

Continued from page 14

gigantic, untidy mounds of whipped cream, the wall trees, less exposed, give more and better fruit.

They were my father's chief joy. He was not an imaginative man, but purely by instinct he had practically sublimated himself into a peach tree. He knew every mood, understood every symptom of their growth, in the way that a mother can tell whether a cry is caused by a pin or hunger. He manured and limed and pruned and sprayed, knowing in his bones the exact time and amount and method.

In the far corner of the orchard, but several feet out from the intersecting walls, stood a sycamore tree. It was a great, gnarled, shaggy old tree. The roots must have spread for yards all round it, and they sapped every other growth near them. Quite ten of the wall trees and three or four of the bush trees were affected by it. Each year their crops grew a little less, and the trees demanded more of my father's attention, like sickly, irritable children.

He hadn't the heart to cut it down, and, in any case, his life would have been a misery if he tried. Young Rachael Meyrick loved the tree. She was, as I have said, a tomboyish girl, and a lot of her time was spent up the tree, reading. She had made a sort of cradle of branches for herself up there, and with its gnarled, limbed trunk, the tree was easy to climb.

BUT one year matters came to a head. There had been an extremely poor crop the previous year, following a sudden snap frost, and then, in the spring, old Meyrick made the decision. He made it after the blossom for the new crop was already out, and when my father came home after getting his orders, he was in a temper.

"Got to chop the old sickymore down." His pipe had gone out, and he threw it irritably on the mantelpiece. "Damn big healthy tree. Needs a gang of hosses to pull 'im. I told him you can't mess about with trees like his stocks and shares. Terrible to pull trees in spring. Lay me up for a week, I daresay."

In the end, he funked it. He was supposed to do the job on a Saturday. Rachael Meyrick was being got away for the day, and the tree had to be down by the time she was back. But on the Friday, his lumbago came on. He crawled around uneasily all day with one hand to his back, moaning rather desperately, and I knew what would happen. I asked old Rumble for the next day off, and got it: I wasn't much use to him anyway.

My father told me how it had to be done, and then, after supper on Friday night, he sent me down to tell Mr. Meyrick about it.

I waited in the hall while Mrs. Bull, the housekeeper, went to fetch him. It was a warm, comfortable house with good furniture and carpets and a lot of copper and brass on the broad picture rails, but it was gloomy and silent as a graveyard. Mrs. Meyrick was seldom out of her room, and I suppose after dinner there was little for Rachael to do.

Mr. Meyrick was a thin, weak-looking man who smelt, somehow, of eucalyptus. He had a distracted, tense manner, as though always listening for another half-heard voice. His hair should have been grey, but it wasn't. It was brown, a light auburn shade, the same colour as Rachael's. It gave him a curiously

"I didn't get the rise, but the boss was very decent—laughing and joking about it all day"

prim look; surmounting his pale, abstracted face it was always unnaturally neat, like a wig.

He said: "Yes, yes, Tom, what is it?"

I said: "Evening, Mr. Meyrick. Dad sent me to say his lumbago is worse and he won't be able to chop the tree down tomorrow, but——"

"Just a minute. Just a minute." He looked behind him at the stairs, and drew me into his study. He laughed a little anxiously. "Thought perhaps Miss Rachael might be there. She's very attached to the tree. I didn't really wish to hurt her." And then my message seemed to sink in. He said: "Damn it, why must the man. . . ! I had it all arranged. . . ." He was angry and a little ashamed of his furtiveness, and also exasperated because his plans, as they always seemed to, were going astray again.

I said: "You don't have to worry, Mr. Meyrick——"

He interrupted coldly: "I'm not worrying, my boy. It's deuced awkward, that's all."

"But I can do it. Dad told me all about it. I'll be able to manage all right."

He said: "Well, if your father thinks you can do it—I don't imagine he'd let you try otherwise—perhaps it might be possible." He chewed suddenly, abstractedly at a large, pale knuckle. "Now tell me, how do you think you will go about it? Ten o'clock in the morning, mind. I must have it down and away from here by the evening. How long do you think it will take you to chop it?"

I was feeling nervous and jumpy. He always made me feel like that. As a boy I had a presentiment that he was always trying to make up his mind to blow his brains out. I began to tell him, and he listened to me, touching things on his desk, looking at me sharply, nodding, drumming his fingers on books, tapping with his feet, until I was in a state of almost hysterical desperation.

In the end he said: "Yes, well, we'll see. You'll have to try. I shall give you ten shillings for the job, Tom."

I almost began to say that I couldn't take it, that I was only doing a job for dad anyway, but again I stopped myself in time. It would only offend him, and anyway, I could use the money. So I thanked him, and he rubbed his hands and said: "Yes, well, I suppose you'll want to have a look at the tools tonight. The shed is unlocked. And remember, Tom, ten o'clock sharp. Miss Rachael is leaving at nine thirty. No need to cause her unnecessary distress."

I said good night to him, and let myself out of the back door, and walked across the moonlit lawn and up the path towards the shed. The shed was just inside the orchard, tucked away in the near corner.

For several days the weather had been unusually warm, and now it was a mild, brilliant night. As I walked into the orchard, I stopped and almost gasped. The orchard was radiant and alive. The moonlight, seeping down on the fantastic display of blossom seemed to be flickering, as though it were a spotlight held in unsteady hands. The shining blossomed arms of the trees along the wall were raised as though, for a fragment of a moment, dancers had paused during a rapt, ecstatic movement.

I stood stock still, quite unable to move. There was a frightening, barbarous splendour about it, lying open to the sky, waiting, waiting, and for a moment I had a mad, irrational urge to turn round and run away and see about the tools in the morning.

But I just stood, staring, and gradually I let my breath out. I had not realized I was holding it.

AFTER a few moments, when the shock had gone, I was still puzzled by the inexplicable sensation of murmuring movement in the calm, breathless night. And then I realized what it was. There was someone in the orchard. I could think only of my father. It must be my father, working in his shirt sleeves, though why he had come here after taking so much trouble to explain that he could not move, never occurred to me.

I began to walk across the turf, slowly, peering hard at the half-seen, flickering figure. My footsteps were silent on the turf, and I was only a few yards away before I noticed who it was, and, in my turn was noticed. It was Rachael Meyrick, and she was bending to the ground, rising on her toes, waving her arms, turning this way and that. She span round, her face bluish and pallid in the moonlight, and she saw me. She gave a little cry, and I stopped dead in my tracks, unable for the life of me to utter a sound.

She had on a white slip, or a petticoat—I couldn't tell what it was, a silk, shapeless garment hanging from straps on her naked shoulders. In the moonlight it gave her a curiously cold, sexless appearance.

She said, sharply: "Who is it?" And as I gulped, moistening my lips, she said in a tone half disappointed, half relieved: "Oh, you're Fletcher's boy, Tom. What do you want?"

I said inanely: "Good evening," aware suddenly that I couldn't tell her what I wanted, and then, in another moment, that her own appearance needed explanation. I said: "My father forgot some tools. . . . Aren't you cold like that?"

The moonlight glinted on her eyes and teeth as she stood looking at me, thoughtfully.

She said: "I heard your father had lumbago. He won't be able to work, will he? I mean, he won't be able to come here tomorrow?"

I said: "No, he can't move, Miss——" and, instantly regretting the unthinking courtesy, and suddenly angry, I went on: "You shouldn't be down here like that. You'll catch cold. You gave me quite a turn."

"Oh." She laughed. We were standing a couple of yards apart, and now she came forward, close to me. "I'm sorry I frightened you, Tom. I'm not cold. Feel me."

GINGERLY I felt her arm. She took my hand and placed it on her warm neck, and then her shoulder, and on her chest, above the outline of the small, immature breasts.

The night was suddenly electric. My throat was thick, and in the moonlight I blushed furiously. She was not cold. She was warm, warm and soft and fragrant. She let my hand go.

"I'm not cold, am I?"

"No."

She looked at me. Her lower lip came down as she smiled, and the moonlight caught her teeth and her glistening lip. "I believe I've shocked you. Are you really shocked, Tom?"

"No. Well——" I shifted my feet and tried to laugh. "It was funny seeing you like that."

"Was it? What did it look like?"

What did it look like? I hadn't the words or the gall to tell what I had felt in that first long, time-suspended moment when I seemed to be watching some awful and beautiful unearthly ballet.

I said: "It looked queer."

"Did it?" She looked at me intently for a moment, and I was reminded of her father, half-listening to some other voice. "Did it look like a wedding to you? The orchard, I mean, all the pink and white and the froth and the frills. I was undressing to go to bed and I just looked out of my window and I saw it. It was so beautiful, so unearthly somehow. I just rushed down." She looked at me, in another mood now, and grinned. "I was dancing. I was a bride of the spring." She laughed, and I shifted my feet again, not knowing whether to laugh with her.

She took my hand. "Come and walk round."

We walked round the trees, looking at the blossom, and now the mystery had gone out of it, but the enchantment was still there. There was a delicate fragrance over the orchard, and the trees, loaded with their small, perfect blooms, each a small moon itself, populated it like a constellation of stars.

Rachael said: "You didn't play with me much as a child, did you, Tom? I used to think you were a very nasty, selfish boy."

"It wasn't that," I said. How could I explain what she must have

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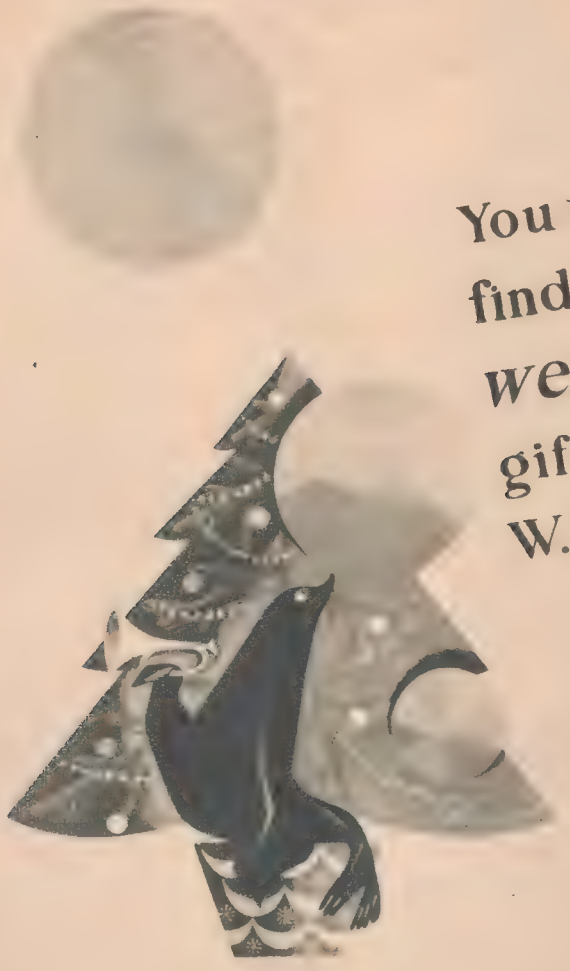

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known, that it hadn't been my "place" to play with her? It was a thought that always made me angry, but now it didn't. "It was just that I always had jobs to do. I didn't get much time."

"Have you got time now? I mean, now that I'm grown up we could be friends, couldn't we?" She knew very well what she was saying; that now she had a mind of her own and could choose her own friends.

My hand tightened in hers. "Yes, we can be friends, Rachael. I'd like to be."

THE night was getting cooler, and she shivered a little. I had no jacket to throw over her shoulders. Greatly daring, I put my arm round her. There was a slight pause, and then she came closer, her head leaning on my shoulder. When we had circled the orchard and arrived at the shed, she said: "What did you come for, Tom? Some tools did you say?"

Torn now between two loyalties, I could only wretchedly stick to the story. "Dad thought he must have left them here."

She said: "I'll help you look for them." She went into the shed, and I followed. It was a roomy shed, stacked now with the empty boxes that would take the peaches to town, and with the bale of straw that would pack them. I lit the oil lamp.

She said: "Do you ever do any gardening work, Tom?"

"I give dad a hand sometimes," I said. "Not often. I'm no good at it."

"What are you doing tomorrow?"

"Working."

She said casually: "I'm going to my aunt's over at Salinger woods. We could pick primroses if you could get the day off." She turned to me and touched my hand. "Couldn't you, Tom? Couldn't you try?"

"I'll try," I said awkwardly. Salinger woods was six miles away. "It'll be difficult though, Saturday."

"Try, Tom." She put her face near to mine. "Would you like to kiss me?"

I don't know what reply I would have made. I didn't have to. With one swift movement, she turned down the lamp and sat back on the straw.

She whispered: "Sit down here, Tom."

I sat down, blood pumping in my throat. The door was open and a strip of moonlight broke across my legs as I sat down by her side. She was in my arms. I had been wondering about the mechanics of kissing a girl, and had, indeed, had a couple of awkward attempts in the village. But this was different. We kissed as naturally and gloriously as—I don't know what. It was a new, intoxicating experience.

Suddenly she drew apart. "I'll see you tomorrow at Salinger woods."

"Rachael, maybe I can't come."

"You'll manage."

I held her, feeling her firm, warm body through the thin silk slip as she raised herself to get up.

"But—what time? Where? What if I can't come? How will I let you know?"

"You know my aunt's house—the vicarage at Salinger. It's a corner house. You can see into the garden from the road. I shall be in the garden. You can wait for me. I'll watch out for you."

A desperate plan was forming in my mind. If I worked like a demon. . . . I said: "I'm sure I can't get the morning off, Rachael. I'll try for the afternoon some time, though. It might be late."

She looked at me. Our faces, now we had sat up, were in moonlight. She was working something out for herself. "I've got to be back by eight o'clock. Can you make it before two?"

I said: "I'll try." By God, I would, too. It was deceitful, and I didn't know how I'd feel about meeting her after cutting down the tree, but I'd think that out later. "I can't promise, Rachael, but I'll try. Oh, Rachael." I tried to draw her to me again, but she stood up, gave me a quick, light kiss, and ran out of the shed.

I sat there for a while longer, muddled and bewildered. How could I cut the tree down now? How could I possibly meet her afterwards? What would she think of me when she found out? I began to work out a vast, complicated plan that would ensure that she would never find out that I had done it, but I knew, with sick shame, that she was bound to.

Next day, the feeling of shame persisted, but I went ahead sullenly. There was nothing else to do.

At ten o'clock, I walked grimly into the orchard. I worked hard, first digging deep under and all round the bushes, and, once they were out, burying their roots in a pile of damp peat.

I meant to throw the tree diagonally, so that it could not harm any of the wall trees.

By twelve o'clock, I had cut a wedge in the trunk, and started to lay a prop to support the tree from behind. This had to be cut and shaped into the trunk, and it was almost one o'clock before I was ready to begin sawing. By then, I was sweating and in a panic that I was not going to be anywhere near finished by two o'clock.

Mrs. Bull came out to tell me my dinner was ready in the kitchen. I had a ravenous hunger, but I daren't stop. I said I'd have it later.

CLUMSY and heavy, the large saw was a tool I'd never handled before. The perspiration was soon running down my face and my back. I took off my shirt. My vest was drenched. But in a sort of sobbing fury, I kept at it, bent down, my weight against the resisting saw, until I had to fall flat on my back on the turf to rest, panting, almost weeping with the effort, and the knowledge that time was running out.

Mr. Meyrick came out as I was staggering up again. The tree was nearly half sawn through, and it was almost two o'clock.

"Tom, Tom, you are punishing yourself rather, aren't you? I've been watching you from the window. Is something the matter? There's plenty of time, my boy. There is really no need to go at it like this. Do you think you will not get it done in time?"

"Don't worry, Mr. Meyrick," I said. I couldn't bother to watch my words now. "Don't worry. It'll—be—all—right." I was sawing away again, panting. My target now was to get the tree down. I was unable to look beyond the point, and in some way, the tree had become for me now the symbol of all my frustrations. To get it down. To—get—it—down.

It went on like that, all my strength on the saw, and then, when the muscles jumped and sagged beyond control, my dead weight on it, until, again, I was lying on my back, looking up at the sky, hot, blistered hands flexed out, throbbing on the turf. From time to time, the church clock chimed the quarters, and at a quarter to three,

LIVING LANGUAGE

by George Beardmore

WHY WE SAY . . .
HAULED OVER THE COALS

IN medieval times an accused person was tried by Ordeal by Fire. He was made to walk barefooted and blindfolded over a bed of red-hot charcoal or ploughshares. If he came out unscathed he was innocent.

The Ordeal was based on the belief that God would work a miracle rather than let the innocent suffer or the guilty escape punishment. The "trial" was reserved for nobility—others had the choice of taking a stone out of boiling water or being tied up and thrown into a river.

with all my movements slowed down, and a sick, empty feeling in my stomach, I began to realize it was no good. But I couldn't stop. Infinitely slowly, the saw bit through the tough old wood, sappy now with spring.

At half past three, when I was nearly through, and it would soon be safe to topple the tree, Mr. Meyrick who had come out again to watch me, gave a sort of gasp, and clutched my arm.

"Oh, my God!" he said faintly. "Leave off, Tom, leave off. Miss Rachael——"

I looked up, wiping the sweat out of my eyes. She was cycling down the path, and then, bicycle thrown against the wall, running across the orchard, shouting: "Stop it! Stop it!"

Mr. Meyrick said: "Rachael. My dear, what are you doing here? Now you must understand—it's got to come down. You must take my word for it——"

There was a dull, frightened pleading in his voice, and she stopped, tears in her eyes, seeing how far I'd got with it. Then she said: "All right, you'd better get on with it, hadn't you?"

I daren't look at her. The saw was still stuck in the tree. I bent down and, as quickly as I could, went through the last inch. Then I felt the tree. It was about right. One good shove now, and it should be down. Rachael turned away and went into the house. I watched her walk slowly away, and then she broke into a run, sobbing. Her father followed her.

The sycamore came down with a tremendous crash, leaving a jagged, splintered edge round the section that had not been sawn. It was down. I threw myself on the ground to rest again. I wasn't hungry now, or sick, but filled instead with a flat, dark feeling of despair. I looked up at the sky, numb with exhaustion.

After a few minutes, I heard a cry from the house. I looked up. It was Rachael, screaming something from the window. Her face disappeared, and a moment later she was running across the orchard again, her father behind her.

"You beast!" she cried. "You filthy, murderous beast. Look at it! Look at it bleeding."

I stared at her, thinking for an instant that she had gone mad, and then I looked at the tree, and I couldn't take my eyes away. Dragged up by the warmth, the sap was rising in the stump of the old tree, welling out in thick, steady gouts, like blood. It frothed up, brimming over the sides into the turf.

I was transfixed by the sight. It was, suddenly, more horrible, more shameful than anything that had happened. The old tree, bleeding to death, touched a new sore place. I felt a traitor and a murderer, and Rachael, crying bitterly, grated on my nerves unbearably. As I turned away, unable to stand any more, she rushed at me suddenly, screaming, slapping, kicking me, so that I fell back, staggering and slipping over the bleeding stump and its slimy, brimming sap.

"Beast!" she screamed. "Beast, beast, beast. I knew something like this was happening. I knew I was right. Something told me—Why do you think I tried to get you away today? Why do you think I even spoke to you last night?"

I lay over the slippery stump, too staggered to move, unable to do anything except stare at her, with my mouth dropped open.

She rushed at me again, shouting whatever came into her head. "Do you think I would let you touch me with a barge pole, you despicable brute? I knew in my bones you were lying——"

Her father was pulling her back. "Rachael! Rachael! Go to your room. Do you hear me? Go to your room at once. Get up, Tom."

I got up, my hand bleeding from the jagged edge of the stump. He was fumbling in his wallet.

"I'm sorry, Tom. I'm sorry. Disgraceful exhibition. Here, here's a pound, Tom. Have a pound. Don't bother about any more work now. Go to your room, Rachael, do you hear me?"

ACCEPTING the pound, I looked at it, and knew I had good use for it, and then, still stunned, I looked at the girl and at her father, and I pushed the money back at him.

"Keep it," I said. "Keep your money. I don't want it. You need it more than I do."

It hurt him more than anything I could say, and I picked up my shirt and went out of the orchard and out of the house, and home. I wanted to hurt them both, but only the man then was vulnerable, and in some way, hurting him hurt me all the more, so that, temporarily I forgot the greater, aching hurt.

I can see all that clearly enough now — everything except the girl's face. There is a figure in a white slip, and a figure in a striped dress, rushing at me. But the face has gone clean out of my mind, vanished without trace. Maybe it is because I wanted to forget, I don't know. But it was not really shame. I think it was anger and bewilderment, and, more subtle, more poisonous, my first disillusion. THE END

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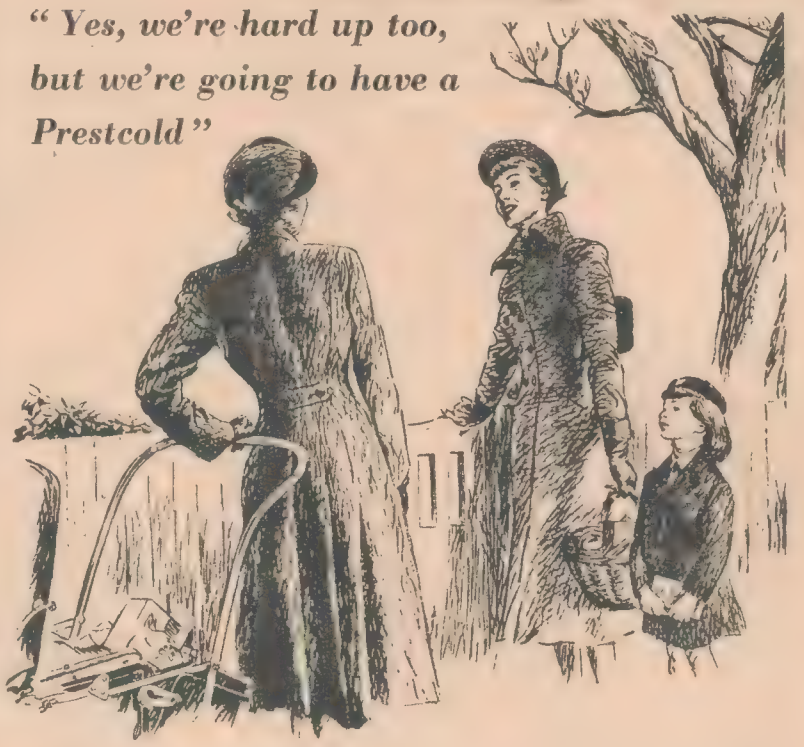

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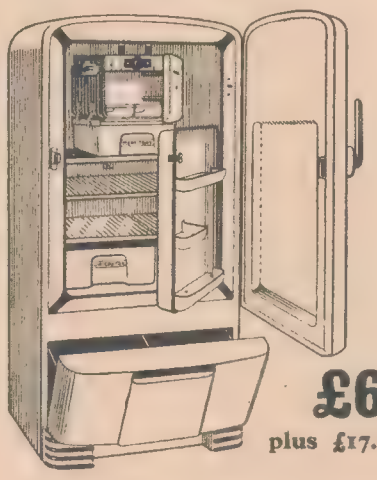

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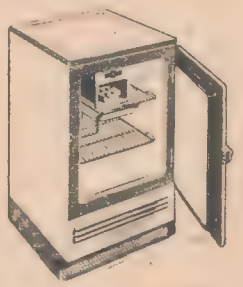

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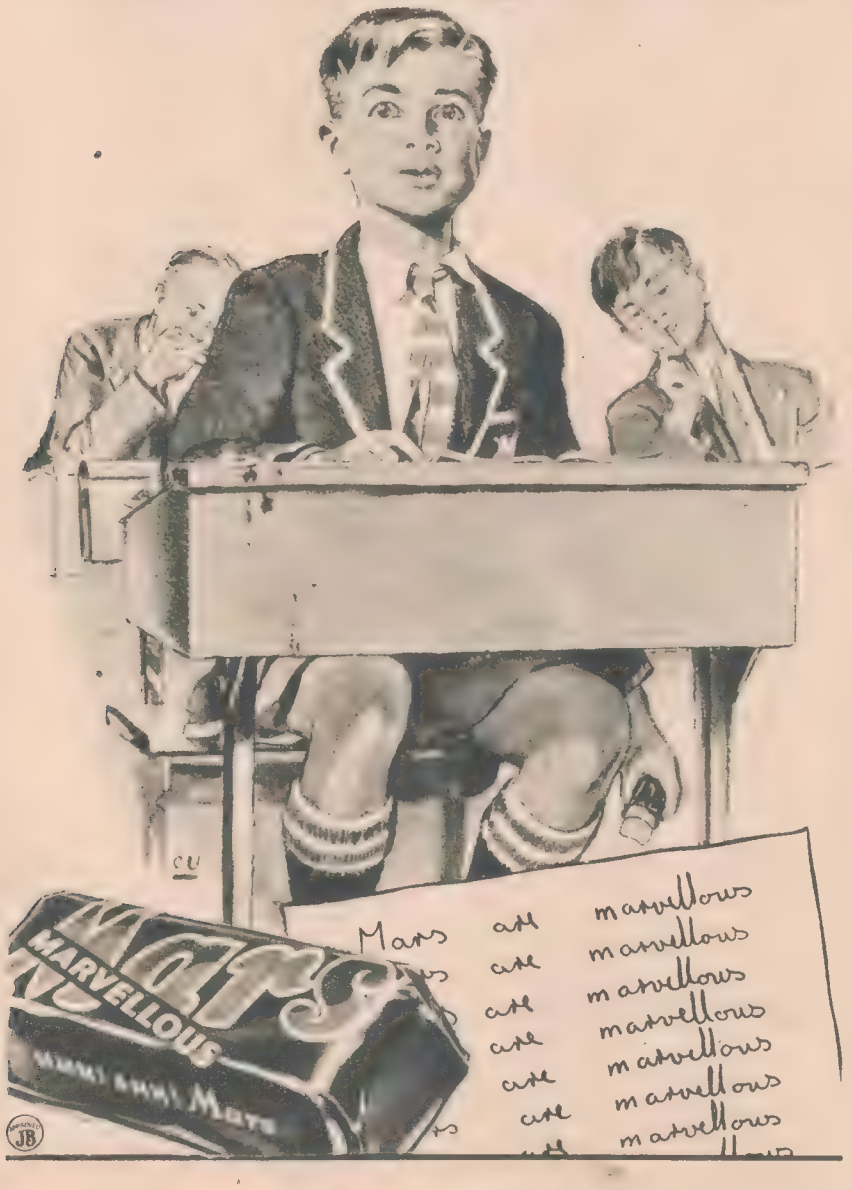

SECRET OF THE BLACK BRAE

Continued from page 17

suddenly stopped and looked about him suspiciously.

"You're quite right," said Mr. Cork, through dry lips. "You've walked into a trap."

Daggers backed a few paces and watched Mr. Cork slyly. "You can't trap me," he said.

"You can't save the Pongratz jewels," went on Mr. Cork, doggedly. "The game's up, Daggers."

"Don't call me Daggers."

"Are you still pretending to yourself you're dead?"

"How can you prove that I'm alive?"

"It may only be necessary to identify the dead. I suppose you know that a gang is after you? It was the threat from them, I imagine, that made it necessary for you to disappear?"

Daggers continued to watch Mr. Cork carefully, but the older man's steady gaze in return never faltered. "Have you anything else to say to me?"

"Yes. Who is the Frenchwoman who shares your interest in this pool?"

"I don't know who you mean."

"Pity. She's standing behind you now and she's got a gun."

At Mr. Cork's warning, Daggers half swung round to face the challenge from behind. But Madame Breuvart, after her catlike advance through the bracken, jumped forward and jabbed the barrel of her automatic into the small of his naked back. He stiffened.

"Who are you?" said Daggers, coldly.

"Johnnie's girl."

"But I told him——"

Madame Breuvart punched the barrel of the automatic into his back, leaving a red circular weal on the white skin. "You told him that nobody must know of your meeting here on the Black Brae. That's right, isn't it?" Madame Breuvart raised her husky voice in anger. "You thought Johnnie himself wouldn't dare to talk because he wanted the world to go on thinking he was killed and because he wanted to collect his fair share of the loot he helped you to get. But he told me. When he came here to collect his half of the Pongratz jewels, which you promised, it was me he confided in. I loved him and he loved me. And you murdered him, your wartime comrade, here in cold blood on the Black Brae."

With the point of the pistol, she turned him until he was standing on the edge of the rock looking into the swirling waters of the pool.

"I'm going to kill you, Gabriel Daggers, as you killed Johnnie."

Mr. Cork, half rising to his feet, gave a cry to check her. But the cry died on his lips. As Madame Breuvart took up the pressure on the trigger, Daggers jumped.

For a moment he seemed to hang in the air over the river. Then, scarcely making a splash in the restless current, he was buried in the Black Brae. The last they saw of him, he was bobbing helplessly in the race below the fall.

ROBERT and Anna had nothing to say to each other. As they followed Daggers down the hill, each of them pretended that the other wasn't there. Utterly divided in purpose, speechlessly out of sympathy, they yet shared a common fear and a common objective. Anna believed that, in spite of Robert, she might still save Daggers; Robert, in spite of Anna, was determined to prevent him from making further mischief.

"Stop," said Robert suddenly. It was the first word they had exchanged since Daggers had made his escape. With a glance of disapproval, Anna went straight on.

"Get down!"

This time, the anxious command in his voice checked her. When she looked back, Robert was already on his knees, pointing warningly up the glen. Moving over the rough ground of the river bank, above the Black Brae, somebody was coming downstream.

"Who is it?"

Holding his hands over his eyes to concentrate his vision, Robert studied the man carefully. Then he slithered down the slope close to Anna's side. "As I thought," he muttered. "It's Kurt."

"Alone?"

"Yes, there's no sign of the other fellow. He was pricked with a bullet and Kurt's probably got rid of him somehow. But he's come back himself, just as old Cork thought he would."

"What does he want?"

"That's a long story. But he means business. What's more, he's armed; or he was when he killed Snatcher."

"Where's Mr. Cork?" asked Anna.

"I hope to God he's safely on his way to Edendale by this time. What I'm wondering is what we ought to do ourselves."

MR. CORK and Madame Breuvart knelt together on the flat rock at the foot of the salmon leap peering into the rusty box which Daggers had dragged out of the river. It was a small box covered with slime and streamy, green weed. When they untwisted the wire which had been used to lash it up, the lid hinged open stiffly. Inside, bedded in rust, discoloured by contact with the water, was the tarnished treasure of the Black Brae.

Mr. Cork stirred up the stuff in the palm of his hand; pearls rotted off the string, rings with empty claws, gold trinkets sticky with green stuff, discoloured stones, broken bracelets, blackened crosses, coronets and pendants; a porridge of jewels and precious metals in a cheap tin box half-filled with stale river water.

Mr. Cork turned it over idly. Idly, he wondered to himself what the premium would be to insure it. Then he remembered the price which so many people had paid for the jewels' possession. He forced down the lid of the box.

"Tell me," he said, tapping the box, "how did these things find their way to a village on the French coast?"

"I don't know. Somebody was caught trying to smuggle them overseas in a fishing boat. He was shot. Others were shot, too. When the commandos raided Avranches, they had them in the District Commandant's house. Johnnie and Daggers broke in and got them. Fleischmann was one of the few they didn't kill."

"Who was Fleischmann?"

"Kurt."

"And who was the man who was killed in the car? The one you recognized?"

"He was another who was in our village."

"A German soldier?"

"He came later, after the raid. He was sent to find out if we were hiding any of the British."

"But he didn't find Johnnie. How did you manage it?"

"I hid him in a hay-loft. They operated on him there by the light of pocket torches. When he was better, we disguised him as a Frenchman. We were married."

"But you said he wasn't your husband."

"We married only to deceive the Boches. He had a wife in England. But I loved him, monsieur."

"And after the war you stayed together?"

"We were very happy, so we kept our secret. Johnnie, so far as England was concerned, was dead, killed in

"I already have a luncheon date for twelve o'clock. How about one o'clock?"

action. We had a farm and a cider orchard and some money in the bank. But he wasn't satisfied with that."

"He wanted the Pongratz jewels?"

"He couldn't forget th n. He was always talking of going o England, finding Daggers and collecting his share. I didn't want him to go. It was dangerous that anybody should recognize him again. But his mind was made up. And I yielded."

As though trying to excuse herself, she went on: "He had a French name and a French passport. He dressed and talked like a Frenchman. It seemed so safe. Johnnie believed that Daggers had only left him behind because he was sure he was dead. 'He will be pleased to see me again,' he said."

"Did you see Johnnie after he saw Daggers?"

"He came home the first time. He said that Daggers had promised him his share and that we should both be rich. But we had to wait. He was to come to Scotland on June 28."

"When was the first visit?"

"February."

"The same month that Daggers took out the insurance," Mr. Cork mused.

"I don't understand."

"It doesn't matter. What was Daggers's plan for Johnnie?"

"He was to visit London as a tourist, hire a car to drive himself, and come here to Edendale. Daggers made a map to show him the rendezvous."

"Do you remember where it was?"

"It was here on the Black Brae, monsieur."

"And Johnnie told you about it. So, when he failed to come home, you wondered what had happened to him?"

"I came to London. I telephoned the hotel at Edendale to inquire for Gabriel Daggers. They told me he was drowned on June 28 in the river, the same day that Johnnie was to have met him. So I booked a room at the hotel and came here."

"How did you confirm your suspicions?"

"It was you."

"When you held me up with your pistol?"

"I was frightened. I didn't know who you were. You might have been Daggers himself."

"You didn't look frightened. And your anxiety for Johnnie didn't prevent you fishing for the jewels."

"I didn't want the jewels. I wanted to be sure that Johnnie told the truth. I thought perhaps it might be an invention and that Johnnie had gone back to his old wife again."

Mr. Cork looked at the box. "Kurt will be after these jewels, too."

"Of course."

"Then," said Mr. Cork softly, "I don't think he'd better get them. . . ."

Kurt, meanwhile, bruised by his fall from the car, was limping along painfully. The only course now was to get another car and make a race for it to the Continent before they got after him for the shooting.

When he heard the sound of voices below the wall of rock which divided him from the river, his first thought was that it might be the police. His hand closed over the butt of his pistol and he strained his ears to hear what was being said. But the noise of the river submerged the sense of the conversation.

He advanced, step by step, until he arrived at the brink. Then he looked down on the kneeling figures of Madame Breuvart and Mr. Cork.

Between them he saw the weedy box. Closed it might be, but, with leaping spirits, he knew for a certainty what it contained.

In his exhilaration he almost crowed with glee. Two white faces turned up in alarm. Kurt swung his pistol at them merrily.

"So you didn't know what had happened to the Pongratz jewels?" he jeered. "You thought you had fooled Kurt. You hoped he was dead, like Daggers. But Kurt has fooled you. He has come back."

Mr. Cork got shakily to his feet. The Frenchwoman squatted back, watching Kurt's twisted eyes, looking for a chance, if he would give one, to bring her own pistol to bear.

"Hand up that box," said Kurt.

"So that you can shoot us without losing it?" said Mr. Cork.

"You are wasting time."

"No, I'm not. You've got a pistol in your hand, and I don't doubt you have every intention of using it. But we've got the jewels. You can't shoot both of us at once. If you fire, we shall at least make sure that this box you want so badly goes with us into the river."

As Mr. Cork made his last desperate throw, he saw that something was happening to Kurt. His mouth was opening in surprise and he was staring, like a man who sees a ghost, at Mr. Cork's feet.

He had indeed seen a ghost. While Mr. Cork was talking, two hands rose out of the river. Closing on the box, they lifted the Pongratz jewels back into the Black Brae.

Kurt, with his deathly grin, suddenly turned away and stumbled excitedly downstream, hunting the water with his pointed pistol.

WHEN Daggers leapt, he recognized that he was taking a desperate chance. No swimmer, however powerful, could expect to hold his own in the angry turmoil of flood. But better the hope of survival in the river than standing on the bank, like a clay pipe set up in a shooting range, waiting for the killing shot. Besides, he knew the ways of the Edendale.

Jumping high to clear the sharp rocks, sticking up like broken teeth around the rim of the pool, he threw himself deliberately into the heaviest water, not merely because it was deeper and therefore safer from the height he was falling, but because the strength of the current there offered a possible outlet for escape.

Daggers had the idea that if he could survive the battering of the current, keep a hold on his consciousness while he was tumbled through the gauntlet of the spate, he might recover control as he was swirled under the bank at the tail of the pool.

As he stiffened to meet the boiling cauldron of water, the breath was punched out of his lungs and the river wrapped round him like a thick, brown blanket. Working his limbs fiercely, he fought to free himself from the smothering pressure that enclosed him. But the current tossed and rolled him

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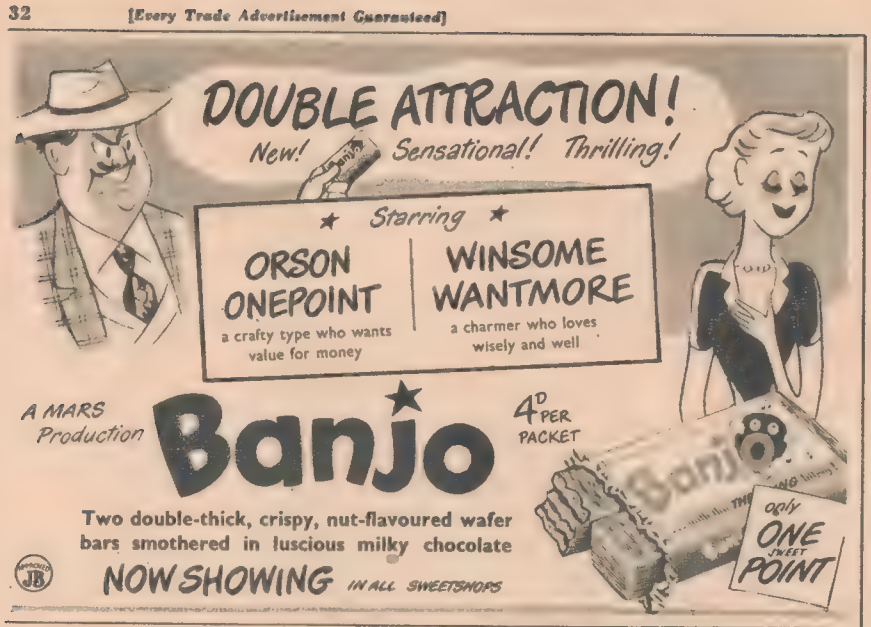
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and held him helpless in its cold embrace.

He felt himself dragged across the river. He winced with pain as he was pressed into the jaw of rocks on the opposite bank. Then he noticed the steadily increasing pressure as he was sucked under water into the tail of the run. His consciousness was slipping fast when he felt his back rubbing gently against a flat plate of submerged rock. Forcing his legs to work, he kicked his way to the surface and breathed again. The current, pushing into his chest, pinned him to the safety of the bank. Not for the first time in his life, Daggers had achieved the nearly impossible.

Treading water, he collected his wits. If they believed he was drowned, they wouldn't be looking for him. It was much more probable that they'd be making for the road in search of assistance. When the hue and cry was over he could come back for the jewels.

He had become so confident in his ownership of the Pongratz jewels that, in the struggle for his own survival, he had forgotten for the moment that he had left the box on the edge of the river. As he recalled what had happened, the hammering started again in his head. He couldn't give up the Pongratz jewels. Without them, he might just as well drown. With them, the world was his whipping-top.

CLAWING the muddy bank with his fingers, hauling himself through the current with slimy armholds on the rocks, he worked his way laboriously upstream again. He found a footing on under-water shelves and a grip round the boulders.

Deafened by the sound of the waterfall, his ears blocked with water, he couldn't hear what was happening on the bank. Neither could he find a change of foothold to enable him to raise his head. The best he could do was to run his fingers inquiringly over the plate of rock above him. Almost at once, he touched the box. Raising both his hands, he pulled it down with him into the river.

There, like a hunted otter in his holt, he waited. He heard the shot which he was sure was meant for him. Then, hugging the box, he let go of the bank and allowed himself to be tumbled down the river again.

At first he was unable to control himself. But the river, as it widened into the rapids, thinned down till the larger boulders stuck out of the water. Daggers snagged himself, like a piece of broken timber, in the triangular throat of a run.

Clutching the Pongratz jewels to his naked ribs, he pushed himself clear and, fighting for a footing, plunged across stream to the next rocky haven. The boulders slipped under his feet. The sharp-edged stones brought him down. But, bruised and cut and breathless, he stumbled on.

Half-way across, the river deepened, and he was carried again by the current. For a time, with one arm wound round the jewels, he could make no progress. But a salmon, disturbed in its lie, gave a plunging splash within a few feet of him. The sudden explosion in the water inspired him to renewed effort. It was enough to get him across. His feet found a foothold in the bottom again and, tearing his nails on the rocks, he gripped at the tangle of roots in the bank and pulled himself clear of the water.

Kurt, standing on the opposite side of the river, shot Daggers in the back at the moment he exposed himself. The bullet hit him in the right shoulder. His arm dropped uselessly and, as he slipped back into the river, the box with the Pongratz jewels rolled out of his nerveless grasp. It bounced on the clay bank. Bursting open, a rainbow shower of bright stones and coloured metals tumbled like gravel into the white turmoil of the river. The box floated for a moment, then it turned over and sank a few yards beyond the place where Daggers was lying slumped in the water.

Kurt fired at him again and then again. But the impact of the water turned the bullets. At last, when he pulled the trigger, the pistol in his hand gave a useless click. He loaded another clip of cartridge, but when he looked for Daggers again he was no longer in the same place. It was Kurt's turn to cross the river.

Madame Breuvart and Mr. Cork were watching so anxiously that they didn't notice that, behind them, Anna, with Robert at her side, was also running towards the Black Brae.

WHILE the bullets whipped the water all around him, Daggers lay still. As soon as the shooting stopped, he wriggled clear of the bank and allowed himself to bump inertly downstream. He was numbed with cold, and the dripping red hole in his shoulder pulled him down. But the stream was sluggish under the clay bank and he was checked in his downward drift by a dam of debris which had gathered in a hollow undermining the bank. With his good arm he dragged himself half clear of the water. There he lay, shivering with cold and weakness, and watching with his beady eyes the racing, brown water.

There was something about his attacker that was vaguely familiar, but he couldn't place him. It was so difficult to remember things when his body was chilled and his shoulder so excruciatingly painful. He felt he ought to remember, but his mind was fogged and bewildered. It seemed that there was no end to the list of his enemies. But he would show them. Wounded as he was, he'd beat them yet.

Stirring himself stiffly in the water, he looked up-stream. He sighted Kurt crossing the bridge. So that was it. They were coming hunting for him.

Grasping a root for a handhold, he drew up his legs and dug his heels into the soft clay below water. Next, pressing his back into the bank, he straightened his legs until he was standing in a crouching position under the shelf of the river wall. He waited for a moment, listening. Then, satisfied from the vibration that the inquiring footsteps had halted immediately over his head, he made a half turn of his shoulders and twisted his left arm over the ledge of the bank. Uncoiling himself, he sprang upwards.

Kurt was standing, as Daggers had calculated, immediately above him on

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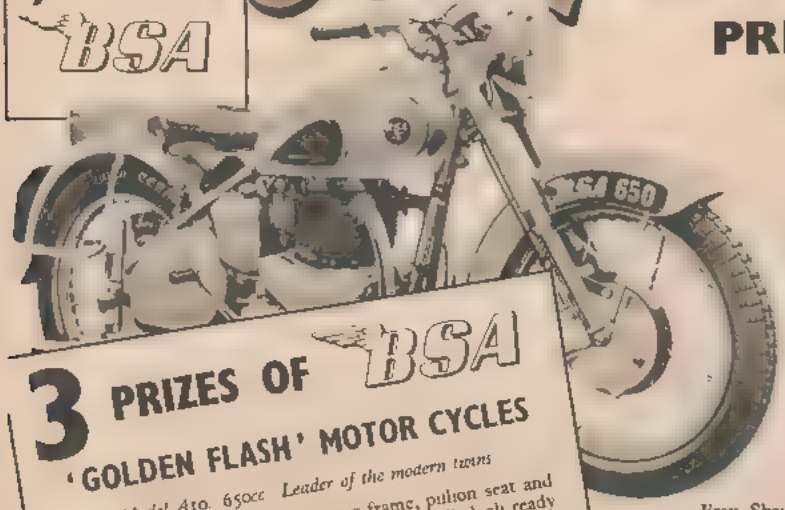

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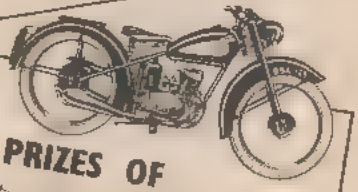

6 PRIZES OF BSA 'BANTAM' MOTOR CYCLES

The handiest 125cc lightweight

Fully equipped including dynamo lighting, taxed, insured, tanks filled ready for the road.

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up to **180** prizes of **£1** vouchers

to be spent at the shop where you bought your Easy Shaving Stick will be awarded to competitors whose entries show substantial merit.

TAKE MY TIP! LEVER'S **EASY** SHAVING STICK REALLY GIVES BETTER, LONGER-LASTING SHAVES.

READ THESE FACTS ABOUT LEVER'S EASY SHAVING STICK they may help you to win!

—it has a thick creamy lather which lasts—it gives you a fine quick shave and your face stays smooth—it offers the best shaving value—a full-size stick for only 8½d

Don't worry about handwriting here are points the judges will look for: Aptness of presenting the selling points for Lever's Easy Shaving Stick and the skill, forcefulness and originality shown in the idea submitted

NOTE: THE COMPETITION CLOSES ON JAN 31st 1951. Enter now!

SEND THIS WRAPPER

READ THESE RULES CAREFULLY

1 Anyone over 16 years of age and resident in Great Britain or Northern Ireland may enter except employees and their families of Lever Brothers & Unilever Limited and its associated companies

2 Enter by filling in the entry form below and a competitor may send in as many entries as he wishes provided he obtains and encloses a form from any local dealer for each attempt and he must use each entry form

3 The entry with must be a slogan or advertisement which must be original and either from one of Lever's Easy Shaving Sticks or Lever's Compet tion, (Dept. JB1), Lever Sales Ltd., 16 Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2 and arrive not later than January 31st, 1951.

4 Every entry will be judged by a panel of independent judges and prizes will be awarded in order of merit to the competitors whose efforts show the greatest merit

5 No competitor may win more than one prize. Cash value of prizes may be taken in lieu if desired.

6 In the event of a tie or ties the cash value of prizes will be divided

7 The judges' decision will be final and legally binding.

8 Judges will include, an advertising manager of a famous company, a leading advertising writer an editor of a well-known publication a popular radio star and a marketing expert

9 No responsibility can be accepted by Lever Sales Limited for entries lost, delayed, mislaid or damaged

10 Copyright of all entries will belong to Lever Sales Limited

11 All prize winners will be notified by post, and names and addresses of winners of major prizes will be published in this paper on March 1st, 1951. Any competitor wishing to receive a full list of prize winners should enclose a stamped addressed envelope with his entry

ENTRY FORM

To **Lever's Competition (Dept. JB1), Lever Sales Ltd., 16 Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2**

Write your slogan not more than 15 words in the space below in block capitals.

Competitor's Name

Address

I have read and agree to abide by the rules of this competition

Competitor's Signature

Write the name and address of the dealer where you bought your Lever's Easy Shaving Stick

Windows to a New World

One of Penrith Co-operative Society's Mobile Shops. Drawn by Rowland Hilder R.I

From the ancient Cumberland market town of Penrith—in turn Celtic stronghold, Roman town, and defier of the conquering Normans—the Mobile Shop of Penrith Co-operative Society, crammed with £400 worth of stock, takes C.W.S goods through some of the most beautiful scenery in Britain to supply the needs of the outlying farm and lonely Lakeland village.

In the centre of an agricultural area Penrith Society from its beginning in 1890 realised its responsibility to the isolated folk of the countryside. They should not and would not be deprived of the benefits the Co-operative Movement had to offer. The Society began a delivery service that increased with each succeeding year. By the lakes, on the fells, in the dales, through storm and shine, fog and flood, C.W.S goods were carried to the members' homes—by bicycle, on foot, by horse and creaking van. Today, with a fleet of motor vehicles — including travelling shops — that covers nearly 300,000 miles a year, it is a remarkable fact that Penrith Society conducts three fourths of its trade on wheels, and only one fourth over the counter! Whether in a Lakeland fastness or the heart of a great city the principles of Co-operation operate unchanged from those put into practice by the Rochdale Pioneers little more than a century ago in their tiny, Toad Lane store. They bought wholesale, sold at market prices and shared the trading surplus as dividend among the members in proportion to purchases. Each member had a vote and a voice in the affairs of the Society. A new world was opened to them. Little wonder that the progress of the Movement in so short a time has been phenomenal; little wonder that it is *still* growing . . . .

CWS

Actual builder of fine stores, of factories, of mobile shops, the C.W.S—manufacturing and wholesaling organisation of the Co-operative Movement—produces in its own 194 factories almost everything needed in the home. And, through the Co-operative non-profit system of trading, C.W.S goods help millions of members to cut their cost of living.

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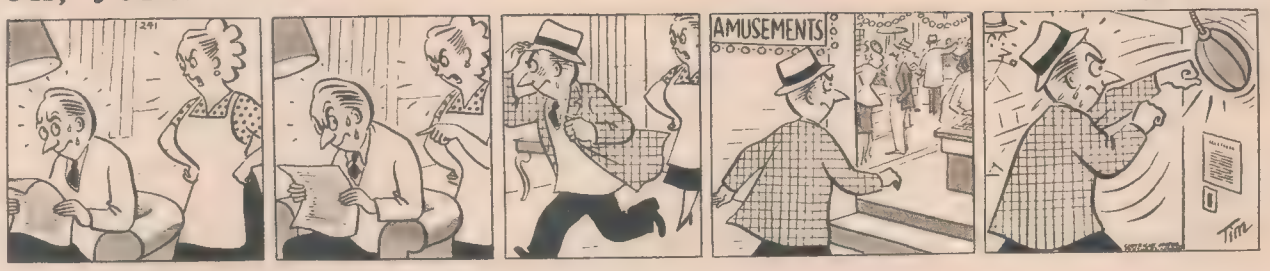
The distinctive Crosbie label is your guarantee of highest quality. Buy a jar today. If any difficulty in obtaining supplies, write to us for the name of your local supplier.
CROSBIES PURE FOOD CO. LTD. SOUTHALL, MIDDX
BRADLEY LINCS, · LAW, SCOTLAND

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



the brink of the grass bank. He had estimated accurately where Daggers was hiding, but he was unable to spot him over the top of the overhanging edge. The attack, when it came, completely surprised him.

Daggers rosé out of the river like an apparition. His naked torso was discoloured by the clay and rubbish he had collected worming his way up the bank. The blood from his shoulder streaked down his ribs. He was marked with the red weals and bruises of his battering in the river. His black hair hung about him like water-weed and there was an inhuman glint in his dark and burning eyes.

His left hand closed round Kurt's ankle like a steel trap and, with a violent muscular effort, he gave a twist of his wrist which tumbled Kurt into the water with him. Kurt, with a pistol in his hand, never had the ghost of a chance to use it. He dropped the pistol while, making an arc in the air, he instinctively opened his hands to meet the water.

Daggers never released the grip on his ankle. He held him as if he was tailing a fish while Kurt floundered and plunged downstream of him in the pull of the current. But it couldn't last long. There was a light of triumph in Daggers's eyes, and a look of recognition, too, as he identified his opponent; but the strain was telling on him.

Kurt was a big man, fourteen stone, at least, to Daggers's eleven. Kurt was fresh and unwounded and, when he recovered from the first surprise of attack and the shock of immersion, Daggers couldn't prevent him from twisting on to his back and pulling himself towards the cover of the bank. As he did so, Kurt kicked fiercely, and Daggers, for all his fanatical resolve, could hold on to him no longer.

He released his grip and reeled backwards. But, while Kurt was still struggling for a footing in the mud, Daggers let himself go with the current. Closing with him again, he wrapped his arm round his opponent's neck. Kurt tried to hold him off with a short arm punch to the groin, but Daggers was dragging on his neck like a dead weight, and the tuft of weeds which was all Kurt could find to grab hold of started to break away from the bank. He was slipping. As he made a last effort to free himself, they were both carried clear of the side, out into the river and into the rush of rough water. As Kurt went under, with Daggers like a human anchor on his neck, he felt for his knife. Dragging it from his pocket, he managed to tear it open. Then, desperately, he plunged it again and again into Daggers's body. He could feel him moving under the repeated blows, but the strangling grip never yielded. He felt his lungs tightening and a thunderous noise in his ears. Then, suddenly, the awful grip slackened and slid away from his neck.

Kurt struggled to the surface to find himself in a race of white-flecked, mist-covered water. He saw the broken rocks ahead, but was powerless to protect his body from the repeated blows or the whip-lash of the current as it tossed him through a narrow gully of rock, down a staircase of boiling falls lined with granite spikes. He was unconscious before his body rolled into the last of the rock-pans of the Devil's Staircase and over the brink into the waterfall of the Manse Pool.

There, the drowned body of Kurt rested, held loosely under the hang of the fall and viewed suspiciously by the salmon, waiting in ragged ranks for their turn to battle upstream on the last stages of their journey from the sea.

GABRIEL DAGGERS was dying. But, mortally wounded as he was, he was still fighting for survival. The force of the current had warned him that they were being carried into the neck of the murderous race that funnelled into the Manse Pool. Releasing his armhold, he had kicked himself to the surface, and as he was carried downstream he hugged one of the pyramids of rock that stood like sentries at the gates of a watery Hades. There he hung, marooned in the troubled water, his life blood seeping with the current down to the sea.

Anna saw him first. With a sudden cry she stood still on the bank pointing at the dark head and the white, sinewy arm clutching the rock above the white water leading to the fall.

"Gabriel!" she shouted.

Daggers gave no sign of consciousness. Then the head moved and a look of imploring recognition came into his eyes. His arm, wrapped round the rock, began to slip. At the same moment, Anna, standing upstream of him, slipped over the edge of the bank and plunged into the river.

"Hold on," she shouted. "I'm coming."

With a ghastly grin, Daggers saw what was happening. His hold tightened and somehow he checked himself from slipping farther.

Anna was making it. The current was carrying her down but her limbs were working at sprint speed and she moved in a steady diagonal across the river. She grabbed the rock on which Daggers was hanging and threw her other arm around his neck. But she couldn't hold him. He had made his final effort. As his arm slipped clear, he managed to close his hand in hers.

From the bank they watched her hold his weight for a second or two. Then they saw a look of terror on her face. She was losing her own hold on the rock and Daggers was pulling her down with him.

Wrenching off his coat, Robert raced downstream. He had a momentary glimpse of Anna in the gully. Then he slid down on his back to the point where the Devil's Staircase joined the Manse Pool. He went straight on into the water at the edge of the fall, hardly knowing what he was doing, but trusting wildly in fortune. The water at the edge was fairly quiet. His feet settled firmly on the bottom in not more than four feet of water. If he could grab Anna as she was carried through there was some chance he could hold her.

He saw her, still struggling in Daggers's death grip, as the two bodies came to the hang of the fall. As they toppled over, Robert leaned forward and seized her arm. The pull was too fierce. He went with them into the deep water, but he kept his hold on Anna. Ignoring where the current was taking them, he worked about until he found the dead man's hand in hers. He forced open the fingers. And, as his lungs were bursting, he felt her drifting free. But he could do no more.

ROBERT came to, lying on his back, with Montague Cork leaning over him, watching him with solemn eyes. He blinked. "Is Anna all right?" he said.

"Madame Breuvart is giving her first aid now. She says she'll be all right."

"Did you have much trouble getting us out?"

"No, you both drifted inshore where we were able to drag you out quite easily. But it was a near thing, Robert."

"Is that bastard Daggers really dead at last?"

"I think so, God help him."

"Then everything's O.K.?"

"Yes, Robert. It's all over."

Robert smiled. "Looks as if we won't have to pay that insurance, doesn't it, sir?" Then he felt himself going off to sleep.

To be concluded next week

I AM A BLIND HOUSEWIFE

Continued from page 19

remaining that I refused to draw attention to myself by eating in public or carrying a white stick. I was bitterly resentful of people who saw through my pretence. "Look," I heard an onlooker once exclaim loudly, as I fumbled my way down the road, "she's blind," and I remember retorting fiercely: "I may be blind, but I'm not deaf."

Already the problems of everyday life were magnified a hundredfold. Helping to lay the table was a nightmare job; though I could dimly see both cup and table, somehow I could never contrive to place the cup on it. Going out alone was almost always disastrous. Sometimes I ended up, sobbing and hopelessly lost, to be guided home by a stranger. At other times I skinned my nose raw, bumping into trees.

Little by little I was brought face to face with the reality of the situation. There was the time when a kindly, middle-aged woman called, on an afternoon when I was feeling especially low. "I've come to teach you Braille, my dear." I felt suddenly cold and hollow in the pit of my stomach. "Braille? Oh, but there's really no need for that. This is only a temporary thing."

"Of course it is, yes. But you never know when it might come in useful, do you?" She had cleverly persuaded me almost before I had realized it, and within four months, under her tuition, I had managed to learn it. At about that time, I think my sense of humour began to come back; it tickled me to know that my small nephew, taking my first Braille book and tracing the depressions with tightly shut eyes, was indignant when he couldn't make head or tail of it.

Learning All Over Again

I was still determined on some kind of a career, consoling myself that at least I knew how to type. But now there came a second shock: even typing would have to be learnt all over again from scratch. This time it was my sister who taught me and I worked at it until I had finally become an expert touch typist. I was now realizing that the blind have to be more than just good at their jobs.

But gradually I began to feel in need of a change. I felt that for a time at least I had to cut myself off completely from the quiet sympathy of the people I knew, and although I didn't fully realize it at the time, it was the best move I could have made. Sitting at home all day, brooding on the unfairness of life, I had been in grave danger of losing my will to fight.

Now, at a rehabilitation centre for the blind near Torquay, I came in touch with other sightless girls, many of whom were far worse off than myself, and presently my self-pity died a natural death. I made friends with Muriel, a London girl, and Lillian, an ex-W.A.A.F., and soon we were going everywhere together. Because we didn't really give a hoot for anything, friends soon nicknamed us "The Three Disgraces." But, most important of all, we had started to fight blindness in the right way. We all accepted that it was coming—but we were determined that it should not be the end of our lives.

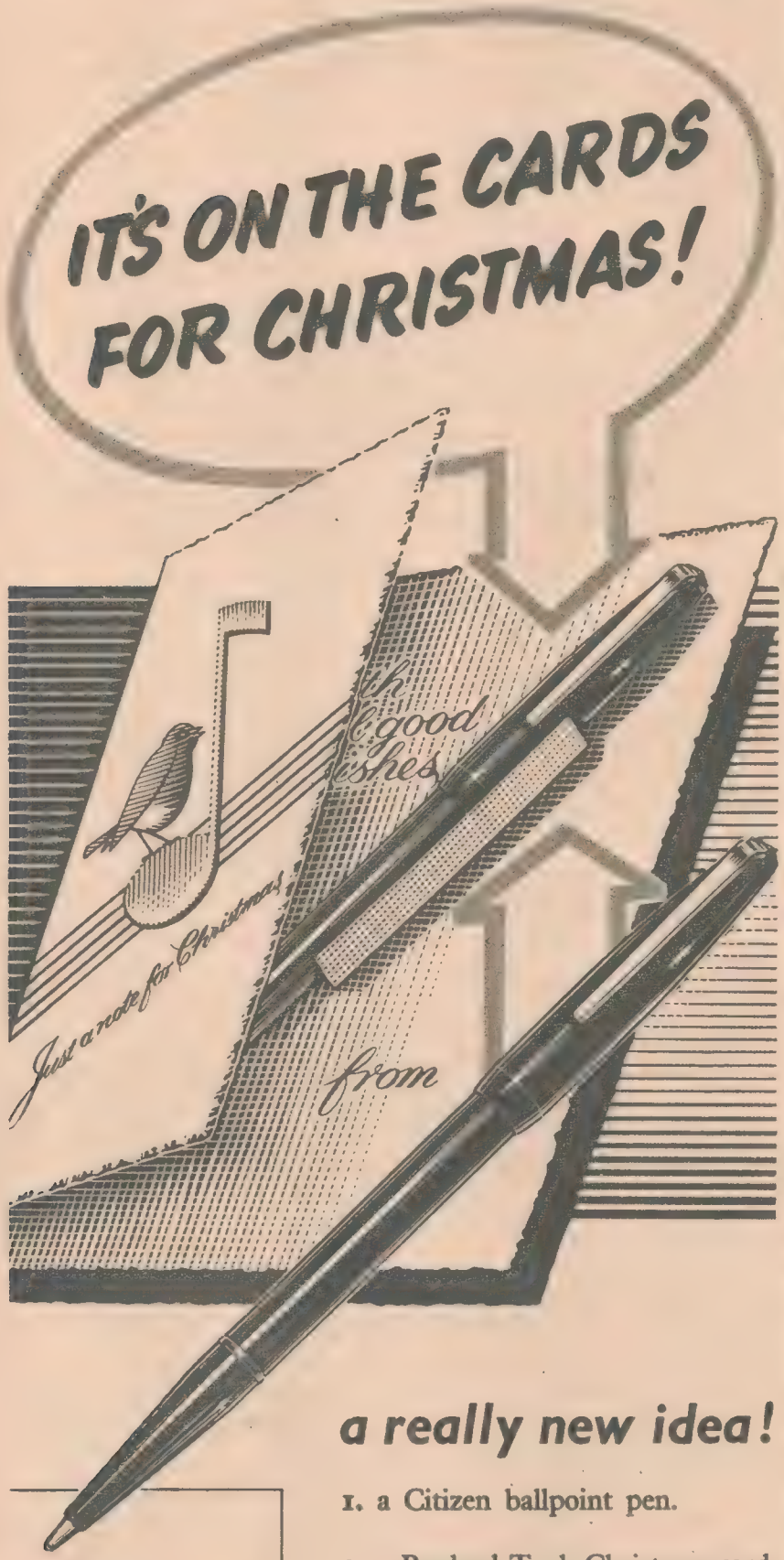
At first we tackled the outside world with other girls in convoys, learning to go shopping together and to cross busy streets, but soon, as we grew bolder, the three of us were venturing forth on our own to listen-in to a film or a concert, sometimes, in the evenings, ending up at a pub. Usually we reached our destination without mishap, though sometimes minor accidents would crop up. Once, as I walked steadfastly down the side of the road, I was, without knowing it, advancing steadily on a squad of R.A.F. recruits. Apparently the horror on their faces when they realized that I wasn't going to alter course was well worth watching, and finally they broke ranks and scattered in confusion.

Alone, inside the centre, I practised walking assiduously, with railings to guide me, but the idea of venturing out on my own without a friend was frankly quite terrifying. Yet it turned out that all I really needed was the incentive. Some weeks later, when I heard the news that my father was coming to see me, it suddenly struck me that the walk from the station to the centre was all uphill and not likely to do his asthma any good. The thought of this ruled out all other considerations, and, almost without realizing I had done it, I walked to the station to meet him.

Developed "Sixth Sense"

I won't pretend that they were easy years which followed, for at first it seemed as if the problems would be never-ending. For journeys outside the house, I had learnt to be almost entirely dependent on my hearing, which meant taking care to avoid any streets where an electric drill might be in use. Entering a strange room for the first time became a matter of rapid detective work; sounds from the street would generally indicate the position of the window, the ticking of the clock guide me to the mantelpiece. I developed a strange "sixth sense" regarding obstacles that stood higher than myself, largely, I think, because they cause a break in the sound-waves, of which a blind person is almost always fully conscious.

I recall one early walk when I suddenly stood stock still before crossing a



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seemingly deserted side street and listened intently. Immediately a voice from somewhere near at hand asked: "Can I help you?"

"There's something in the way," I replied. "I'm sure of it." It turned out to be a large pantechnicon which was blocking the road only a few feet away from me. I went home feeling ludicrously proud of myself.

Though I could no longer judge people by their faces, I found that I could still tell a good deal about them from their handshakes or their intonations, sometimes even just by walking beside them. Silent people, however, worried me more than they had done in the past; there was no substitute for the changing expression of their faces as I talked to them. One uncanny experience cropped up quite recently, when a girl who lived locally called to see me on behalf of a friend. I had been talking to her for quite some time before she announced casually that she had brought her sister with her. I suddenly had the weird feeling of having been, in some way, tricked, for up to that moment her sister had not announced herself by so much as a murmur.

Delicacy of touch developed almost without my knowing it, so that now I find it hard to define just how it is that I can go to my dressing-table drawer and pick out any one of half a dozen jumpers by touch alone. Sometimes, when shopping with a girl friend, I even find it hard to restrain my impatience when shop assistants offer the models to her instead of me, asking, "Would she like this?" But I suppose they find it impossible to believe that I would have known whether I liked it or not just by touching it.

Just Names And Voices

In time I had gained enough confidence to take the six-week course in telephony which is run by the National Institute for the Blind at Bridgnorth, in Shropshire, and for a period after that I worked on the switchboard of a local garage. It felt good to be slowly achieving my independence, even at the cost of being utterly exhausted at the end of each day's work. A blind telephonist has, among other things, to compile her own office directory in Braille, and the strain of memorizing names and voices that will never be anything more than names and voices is tremendous.

Often the only thing I wanted to do was sleep, but even sleep, in those first years, did not come easily; there was no welcome and all-embracing blackness, contrasting with the brilliance of the daylight outside, as there is for sighted people. Sometimes I awoke in the morning with a vague sense of having been cheated, for one is never blind in dreams.

Then, just on seven years ago, I met David. His parents lived not far away from mine in Birmingham, and he, too, was blind. At one time he had served as a deck officer in the Merchant Navy, but had later retired and taken a shore job. He had been married, with everything in the world to look forward to. Then, one night, driving home late in a friend's car, there had been an accident. The car had mounted the pavement and hit a telegraph pole at 60 m.p.h. David's wife had been killed instantaneously, and David, after eighteen months of twilit half-vision, had lost his sight.

At first his blindness had infected him with the same apathy that I had known, though in his case for a different reason. He was older than I, he had already lived a full and adventurous life, and now he couldn't help wondering whether all the effort of readjustment that he would have to make would be worth it in the end. As we came to know one another better, I tried with everything in my power to make him see that it would be. Finally there came the question that I had been half-anticipating for several weeks—why shouldn't we get married and enjoy what life still had to offer us?

I'm afraid our decision wasn't greeted with cries of rapture in our respective family circles. In fact, both our families summoned up every argument to persuade us to change our minds. What sort of chance, they asked, would a blind man, out of work and without a trade at his fingertips, have of supporting a blind wife? But David soon made it clear to them that he was going to train as a telephonist, too, and that, if only they would give their consent to the marriage, he would even agree not to meet me for a year until he had proved his worth. Eventually, since we were obviously set on going through with it, they gave us their blessing and we were married at Sutton Coldfield Register Office on April 3, 1947.

An Ideal Marriage

Now there began a new phase in my life which in many ways, perhaps, was the hardest one of all. For three years we shared a boarding-house existence, but although most of the people we met were sympathetic, without ever fussing over us (a thing we both hate), it had its drawbacks. In the first place, it was too expensive; in the second, I needed more to occupy my time than laundering David's clothes. Our marriage had worked out ideally from the very first, possibly because neither of us had ever expected it to be a bed of roses, but still something seemed to be missing. A flat of our own seemed to be the answer.

Here again, of course, we met with opposition. My knowledge of housekeeping was sketchy, to say the least of it, and even the faint light that I had been able to discern with my right eye, a glow something like a lighted cigarette

NOW YOU KNOW

HAVE a heart with that heart of yours. Sudden bouts of excessive exercise—or too little exercise and too much eating—won't do it any good. Instead, exercise regularly, out in the open air when possible.

Avoid high tempers and nervous tension, especially if you are over forty. They can bring on high blood pressure, a major cause of heart disease. Check with your doctor on breathlessness, "palpitations," irregular heartbeat, vague "indigestion" pains, dizziness, swollen feet and ankles, or constant fatigue.

Even with heart trouble you can live a full and long life if you shun worry and excitement. And remember, there are more people worried about having a bad heart than there are people with heart disease.

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PLAYER'S NAVY CUT CIGARETTES • MEDIUM OR MILD • PLAIN OR CORK TIPPED

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Oh, yes, that's much better—now that he's ended Dry Scalp with 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic. This amazing dressing is the crystal-clear hair tonic that you *need* to supplement your natural scalp oils. Just a 20-second daily massage—and you end Dry Scalp! And 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic is so economical in use, too! Get *your* bottle today!

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Your 24-lb. Xmas Hamper contains plump Surrey Fowl, Pork Sausages, Christmas Pudding, Strawberries in Syrup, rich Fruit Cake, Sweet Biscuits, Christmas Crackers, Cigarettes and a bottle of Fine Old Port.

200 SURREY FOWLS

—each a selected 5/6-lb. bird

2,000 PRIZES of 2s. 6d.

XMAS CAKES as Bonuses —see coupon

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators. 3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL, dated Dec. 30, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

GIANT XMAS OFFER

next week and Grand New Prize Offers in "Bulletin" and "Gazette" dated December 16—apply on coupon below.

HERE you see just one of the many JOHN BULL readers who will be able to afford an extra merry Christmas this year. He's thirty-nine year old Mr. T. Jackson, 9 Salisbury Street, Hadfield, Manchester, who recently won £500 and a £75 television installation for our 1,750th First Prize *Bullet*: GETTING TOUGH—*And* MIGHTY, THE WEST!

Whatever good things Mr. Jackson buys for Christmas with some of his £500, he won't be able to purchase any finer Christmas fare than the 24-lb. Hampers and 5-lb. Surrey Fowls of prewar quality offered finally this week.

To enrich your Christmas table with some of this fare, see that you enter some good *Bullets* this week.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Humanity's Road
Goodbye, 1950
End Of The Chapter
In Austerity's Chains
Friend Fritz
All That Matters
Too Dear
Food And Drink
To Get It Over
Recruiting
Not Much To Ask
Under Her Wing
At The Neighbours' Party
Made His Teeth Chatter
Pottering About
Like Robinson Crusoe
Careless
Auntie Went Hunting And
A Queer Lot
Screaming Blue Murder

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

If There Were No.....
Makes Us.....
Beautifully....., But
Doesn't Seem To.....
Living On.....
"Henry, You're.....!"

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,760 (or Xword 712), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

Continued from next column

BALLER—GRANDPA—SOUNDS LIKE *Turnstile*!

(Above 7 winners each also receive Hamper.)

For five winners of £5 plus Hamper, and five of £2 10s. plus Hamper, see *'Bullets' Bulletin* dated November 18.

Winners of 100 Fowls have been notified, and 2,000 "Good Shots" posted.

"Bullets" Winners 1,755

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Hamper: J. Turner, 230 Amulree Street, Glasgow: THE HEAD COOL HEART WARM—PEACEMAKER'S "ARMAMENT."

£50 plus Hamper: H. McEnhill (Staff), Shenley Hospital, St. Albans: A MIRACLE—THAT *Harwell* HASN'T "DISAPPEARED"!

£25 plus Hamper: J. Drummond, 41 Foulford Street, Cowdenbeath, Fife: AT THE GOLDEN GATES—"YOU'D BETTER WAIT, JAMES!"

OTHER AWARDS. £20: E. H. Pack, 145 Hull Road, Anlaby, Hull: IF IVAN STRUCK — OR JOE ENDED "LOCK-OUT"—. £15: D. H. Colclough. 49 Charminster Road, Bournemouth: ROUND THE WOUNDED — WORLD — "BANDAGE," UNO'S FLAG. £10: J. McDermott, 1 Cunningham Grove, Burnley: BEHIND HIM — WIFEY'S "PIN"—"CUSHION," TOO. £9: J. R. Draper, 18 Edward Avenue, Bobbers Mill, Nottingham: ROUND THE TAXPAYER'S—NECK, "CHAINS" OF *Offices*! £8: Mrs. S. Pennell, Flat 5, 36 Compayne Gardens, N.W.6: ON A GRAND SCALE—SOLLY'S TWENTY-FIRST *Bankruptcy* PARTY! £7: Miss D. Hannaford, 1 Effingham Street, Ramsgate: PRICES GO UP, BUT—IT'S OFFICIALLY CALLED "FLUCTUATION"! £6: Mrs. D. M. G. Jones, 31 Caird Street, London, W.10: WOULD LIKE TO BE FOOT-

Continued in previous column

FINAL XMAS FEASTS FOR XWORDS!

THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 712

1. Lorry driver may occasionally have to cover it as quickly as he knows how
3. It doesn't pay tailor to cut his customer's short
6. It's more than possible that your youngsters meet with this from grown-ups sometimes
9. May make a man jump, whether he wishes to or not
10. There's a crying need for more of these to be available to the public
14. Most of these contain quite a lot of rubbish
15. When housewives simply have to economize, they don't usually cut down amount of this

Down Clues

2. Dentists can do wonders with your teeth provided there is not too much this
4. It may be sound enough and yet not hold water
5. There are people who do this to wood to earn a living
7. There may be quite a lot that this person doesn't glean
8. Has no doubt caused some men to change their course
11. Builder may possibly have to wait before he can get such a piece of timber
12. Shrewd, tactful party whip may be able to do quite a lot with
13. Lashings will probably mean that this is left behind

£100 1st PRIZE CASH PLUS GRAND XMAS DINNER for £100 winner or each sharer

AWARDS VALUE £25 amongst 1st Runners-up AND UP TO

100 XMAS FOWLS AND **100 PLUM PUDDINGS**

(Fowl and Pudding with every 1st Runners-up Award value 5s. or over)

UP TO 500 "SIGNPOST" PRIZES one for each 2nd Runner-up

2 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD 707

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Cards. 2, Sign. 4, Lease. 5, Stool. 10, Hip. 11, Hail. 12, Car. 13, Story. DOWN: 1, Crust. 2, Sleet. 3, Log. 6, Stilts. 7, Tap. 8, Chary. 9, Cats. TWO £100 SHARERS (entries differing at one point only from Competitors' Answers above): Miss E. Tate, 65 Clydesdale Road, Romford, Essex; H. Wilson, Wellfield House West, Todmorden, Lancs. Each winner also receives Grand Xmas Dinner.

For entries differing at two points only, twelve entrants share awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up and receive Xmas Fowl and Pudding in addition. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

EXAMPLE ..... 6d.

BULLET .....

EX. ..... 6d.

B. .....

EX. ..... 6d.

B. .....

EX. ..... 6d.

B. .....

XMAS CAKE BONUSES A delicious Xmas Cake accompanies each of this week's 200 Surrey Fowls won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

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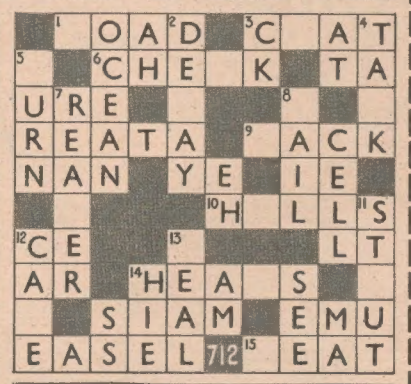
ONE LAST WEEK OF XMAS FARE

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated Dec. 16.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.



CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

Puzzle and Form strictly copyright **712** Closing Postmark, Monday, December 4

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in a darkened room, had gone some four years previously. Because further complications had arisen, I had been forced to undergo an operation and have the eye removed. To attempt to live as a normal housewife now, said everyone, was sheer lunacy. David would be at work all day; what would I do if anything was to happen to me during that time?

Even these arguments did nothing to sway our purpose. We were determined that our blindness should handicap us as little as possible; that for us there should be no lonely old age in a home for the blind, no complete dependence on other people. Friends helped us to choose our flat and our colour scheme—cream and apple green—and even the fact that the rooms were in none too good a condition did not deter us. Unable to see them ourselves, we could do little more than form an ideal picture of what they *could* look like.

On one occasion David and I arrived at the flat by night, donned overalls and settled down to scrub the floors. Halfway through our labours the phone rang; a girl friend of mine, who knew we were there, was offering to come and join the party. Luckily I had remembered to bring some light bulbs. It had made little difference to us that we were doing the job in the dark.

Household "Musts"

Eventually, at the beginning of last April, we were able to gauge from our friends' descriptions that the flat was now more or less as we had visualized it, and I settled down to housekeeping in earnest. I began to realize how many of the things that would be a luxury in some households are absolute "musts" in a blind household. Gas and electric fires, for instance, have had to take the place of coal, ruling out the chance of unseen sparks igniting the carpet. A telephone is an absolute necessity; it gives me contact with the outside world in case of danger and has reduced shopping to a welcome once-weekly journey for forgotten oddments. A vacuum cleaner, which arrived as a Christmas present, has proved another godsend. Previously, unable to see the floors, I had been scrubbing and polishing them every day until they were as slippery as a skating-rink.

Cooking proved less of a problem than I had imagined. Bread, which could prove tricky, arrives from the bakery already sliced, but weighing out food and peeling vegetables present few difficulties (I find that I weep much less now when peeling onions). I even studied my Braille cookery book and managed to tackle kedgeree, curry and shortbread with success. We had always used a gas cooker at home and at first I found an electric one a little unmanageable, but David exercised admirable restraint on the first few mornings when I served his bacon burned to a crisp.

Tidiness in the home has become something of a fetish; often I find that the shapes of bottles and jars will reveal their contents, but only so long as they remain in their appointed places. Tins I have coped with by attaching Braille

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

READERS with personal problems can obtain the help of John Bull's team of experts. Inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

labels to them, and these can always be re-attached to the replacements. Cotton-reels are identified in the same way, and so are the wool cards I use when darning David's socks. Darning itself is carried out with the aid of a self-threading needle.

Other things, of course, are less easy. While washing clothes presents few problems—except that I tend to use up too much soap—ironing is particularly hazardous; often I burn my fingers while trying to grab the iron quickly, and pressing complicated pleats is a nightmare job. Pouring out liquids can be equally hard; I usually breathe a sigh of relief when the gravy goes into the tureen without spilling, and at tea parties I have taken to asking the guests to pour their own tea. I decided on this following an occasion when the family came to tea and my brother inquired hastily, "Shall *I* pour, Allene?" after I had dealt with the first cup. Too late, I remembered that I had used the rough-and-ready method adopted by most blind people in their own homes—dipping my little finger over the rim of the cup to make sure that it did not overflow.

Reading By Gramophone

Amusing ourselves in our spare time has never been quite so difficult as we had thought. "Talking books," gramophone recordings of the latest best-sellers, help to supplement our radio programmes, and since each side takes half an hour to play, we don't have to get up and change the records too often. Both of us prefer these to ordinary Braille reading, for generally, after half an hour, the fingertips tire and cease to record the impressions, which means that neither of us can read a Braille book in much under a month. Films and plays inevitably mean less to us than they did in the past, but we still find it possible to follow a straight drama. Dancing is still a pleasure to me, though this is often more of a problem to a blind man—he has the unenviable job of setting the pace.

For one thing above all I remain truly grateful—the real kindliness that I have known, both from friends and strangers, during the past few years. I know now that wherever I go I can never be really lost; there is always someone willing to come to my aid. Friendly voices tell me the right bus to hail, and often friendly hands help me to mount the step. If ever Bing, my canary, escapes, my neighbours are wonderfully patient in helping me to catch him, and my girl friends have long grown resigned to "vetting" my appearance before a social occasion. It wasn't always easy at first to be told that my lipstick was smeared or that I was wearing quite the wrong accessories, but in time I learned not to care.

Holiday On Our Own

In the past, it was always a well-chosen friend who came with us on our holidays and devoted many unselfish hours to giving us a good time, but not long ago we decided to experiment. Quite deliberately we went away for a week's holiday on our own, if only to see whether we could rise above the difficulties. I am glad to report that things worked out well. We smelt the salt of the sea, we felt the sun warm upon our faces and life seemed good.

Because I have succeeded in my fight to live the life of a normal happily married woman, I like to think that this story may perhaps help other women who are facing the same future.

It seems a whole lifetime ago that I lay in hospital and realized the full implications of that dread black spot, but it no longer causes me any pain to look back on it. I have the feeling that, from now on, the luck will be on our side.

THE END

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CVS-124

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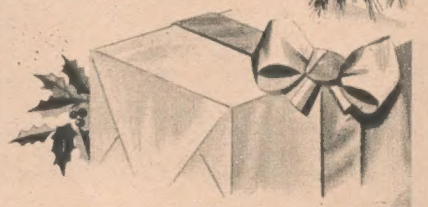

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A Lassie from Lancashire tells how you can give

SPARKLING NEW LIFE TO YOUR WHITES!

Southport housewife Mrs. Edna Birch is "Scots by birth, Lancs by marriage." And proof that she combines Scots canniness with Lancashire housepride is evident in her enthusiasm for this wonderful new Oxydol.

Like millions of other women, Mrs. Birch is thrilled by the sparkling new life and cleanness Oxydol puts into whites. "And now I can get all the Oxydol I want," she says. "It means I can give new life to my whites every time!" Buy Oxydol yourself next time.

Give this amazing new life to your whites *and* your colours, too. Give this wonderful new extra cleanness to everything you wash.

Proud Housewife Mrs. Birch (34 Essex Road, Southport), puts a finishing mending touch to a sparkling white shirt. "No getting away from it!" she says. "This new Oxydol really does put new life into whites. Brings them up cleaner, whiter every wash!" And remember, Oxydol contains no bleach, so it gives this extra cleanness and whiteness with perfect safety.

More Clean Shirts for Mr. Birch. As Mrs. Birch puts her ironing to air, she speaks for millions who've discovered Oxydol gives not only cleanness, but wonderful new extra cleanness to all your wash. "I've never used anything like Oxydol for getting clothes clean. Even my husband's dirtiest working shirts come up spotless every time!"

Brilliant New Life for Colours, Too. Pretty 2½ year-old Brenda (Baby Show winner at a holiday camp last year) and her mother owe the brightness of their dresses to Oxydol. "Yes, this new Oxydol puts new life into colours as well as whites," says Mrs. Birch. "Brings them up fresh and bright, keeps the colours sparkling!" And because it contains no bleach or harsh chemical, Oxydol is safer.

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Now you can get more Oxydol, use some in your washing-up water. It's wonderful — cuts through the most troublesome grease . . . brings all your china and glassware up gleaming in no time. And feel how much softer and smoother it keeps your hands! Insist on Oxydol every time.

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OXYDOL